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THE

PULPIT COMMENTARY,

EDITED BY THE

REV. CANON H. D. M. SPENCE, M.A.,

VICAR AND RURAL DEAN OF ST. PANCRAS, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL;

AND BY THE

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL,

EDITOR OF 'THE HOMILETIC QUARTERLY.'

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS

BY THE

REV. CANON F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.
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GENESIS.

Introductions

BY REV. CANON F. W. FARRAR, D.D.; RIGHT REV. H. COTTERILL, D.D.; REV. T. WHITELAW, M.A.

Exposition and Homiletics

BY REV. THOMAS WHITELAW, M.A.

Homilies by Various Authors:

VERY REV. J. F. MONTGOMERY, D.D.; REV. PROF. R. A. REDFORD, M.A., LL.B.; REV. W. ROBERTS, M.A.; REV. F. HASTINGS.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE

REV. CANON F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

It is clear that it would be impossible to use to any good purpose the small space at my command without the most rigid limitation of the object in view. If it were my duty to enter into the masses of literary and critical questions which affect the date and authorship, the unity and special difficulties, of the books of the Old Testament, it would require a much larger space to furnish an adequate introduction to any one of them. In these few pages it would, for instance, be difficult to treat fully of the single question which meets us as soon as we begin to study even the Book of Genesis, namely, what are the true inferences to be drawn from the use of the different names of God—now Jehovah, now Elohim, and now both together, or interchangeably—which we find in the first chapters of the Bible.[1] For the discussion of all such questions the reader must turn to the Introductions to the several books, or to other sources. My present task is directly limited by the character of this Commentary as essentially Homiletic. I am required to furnish some suggestions respecting the use to be made of the Old Testament, the methods to be followed, and the principles to be kept in view, in dealing with it for purposes of religious instruction.

Now exegesis is one thing, and pulpit exhortation is another. A man may be a most useful preacher—he may have great powers of oratory, and may be enabled to enforce many practical and religious lessons with fervour and acceptance—without any pretence to the learning which is essential to a profound and thorough knowledge of Scripture. And such men are sometimes misled into the supposition that they can speak with authority on the meaning and interpretation of particular passages. The supposition is entirely baseless. Any man may gather for his own use, and that of others, the manna which lies everywhere upon the surface of the ground; but no man can without labour become master of all the hidden treasures which lie beneath. Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation. A Christian child, an ignorant peasant, may have a deeper and more spiritual appreciation of all that is most necessary for the inner life of the regenerate soul than is possessed by the greatest master in Israel. But this saving knowledge, though infinitely more

[1] Jehovah, for instance, occurs in twelve consecutive passages in Gen. i.—ix., and Elohim in fifteen consecutive passages. For a brief examination of the subject, see 'Quarry on Genesis,' *passim*, and the 'Speaker's Commentary,' i. pp. 21—30.

important than any other kind of knowledge, does not entitle any one to an opinion of the smallest value on the removal of exegetical difficulties, or on difficult and dubious questions of fact or doctrine. The remark of St. Jerome, that in his day there was no old woman so ignorant and so stupid as not to hold herself entitled to lay down the law on matters of theology, is true in this day; and it applies also to Biblical interpretation. But he who would aspire not only to found upon Scripture texts a moral and spiritual exhortation, but to ascertain and unfold the actual meaning of Scripture,—to decipher the oracles of God as the inspiring light gleams over the letters of the jewelled Urim,—must have at his command a multifarious knowledge. Without this he may be at home in the shallows which the child can ford, but not in the depths where the elephant must swim. Piety and charity are far more important than learning for the sympathetic appreciation of Divine revelation; and prayer is most important of all. Without these a man may know the Bible by heart, and yet possess no effectual, no spiritual knowledge of a single line; but even *with* these there are many passages which, without study and learning, can never be rightly understood. On such passages no unlearned and untrained person should profess the ability to form an opinion of any value. The discovery of the true meaning of many pages of Scripture, the power of looking at it in its right perspective, is only rendered possible by an acquaintance with the original languages, and with the historic and other conditions under which the Scriptures were written. But, in the last few years especially, the results of accumulated study on all questions connected with sacred literature have been placed within the reach of even the humblest students. To neglect these sources of information is inexcusable in any who really reverence the word of God. Without holiness and sincerity their thoughts on Scripture may be useless for the amelioration of mankind; but even if they possess these spiritual gifts, their teaching, not only on minor matters, but even in matters of extreme importance, will be liable (unless it be very humble and very careful) to be defaced by incessant errors of ignorant misinterpretation, which will be all the more dangerous in proportion as it is more dogmatic. The duty of study, in order to ascertain the true rendering and the original sense of Scripture, cannot be impressed too earnestly on all who are to profit by a Homiletic Commentary. It is study alone which has in any degree rescued the Bible from masses of untenable exegesis, traditionally repeated in dull *catenæ* and biassed commentaries. It is study alone which can keep alive and increase the light which has been kindled in recent years.

There are, says Coleridge, some truths so true that they lie in the lumber-room of the memory side by side with the most exploded errors. Now there are two considerations, which are often overlooked from their very obviousness, which are yet of primary importance to the understanding of Scripture. One is, that in reading the Old Testament we must always bear in mind that it is not a *single* book, but a *collection of books*, written by authors very differently situated during a period of nearly 1000 years; that in fact we are dealing not with a book, but with a library and a literature. The other is, that the divisions which we call texts and chapters are entirely modern. There are some readers who may perhaps regard these suggestions as almost impertinently superfluous; but they are made not only under the strong conviction that their steady realisation would save us from multitudes of difficulties, but also with the proof historically before us that it is the neglect of these very considerations which has caused many of the worst errors which the misuse and misinterpretation of Scripture has ever inflicted, and still continues to inflict, upon mankind.

I. In the first place, then, the Old Testament is not "a talisman sent straight down

from heaven, equipollent in all its parts," but contains the remnants of a library, the inspired fragments of a national literature, preserved for us by God's providence out of much that has passed away. To see that this is the case we need go no further than the Bible itself, which quotes passages from many books now lost, and in some instances directly refers to them as authorities for the facts which it narrates.[1] But the extant books of Scripture, in which has been preserved all that is essential for the salvation and enlightenment of mankind, are the diversified record of a progressive revelation, which during 4000 years gave, first to mankind, and then to the chosen people—by slow degrees, and as they were able to bear it—a gradually clearer vision and insight into the eternal relations between God and man.[2]

a. The *diversity* of this record is a very important element. St. Paul calls special attention to it when he speaks of "the *manifold* wisdom" of God. The word which he uses is extremely picturesque; it is ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία—literally, "the *richly-variegated wisdom* of God."[3] The soul of man is as little capable of grasping abstract truth as the eye is capable of gazing on the sun. The sunlight gives its glory and beauty to the world by being reflected in a thousand different colours from the objects around us. And because we should be only wearied and dazzled by a continuance of the intolerable blaze of noon, God's care for us is shown by the manner in which the clouds and the sunset refresh us with the softer glow of reflected and refracted light. Indeed this light is never more beautiful than when its sevenfold perfection and colourless indifference is divided by falling showers, and flung in the colours of the rainbow upon the clouds. It is even so in the spiritual world. God is light. When that light passes in one direct, unbroken ray we have, in his Son, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;"[4] but even *this* revelation of the Father passes in part through the medium of human language, and so reaches us in sweet gradations, and softened by gracious shadows of mystery which only faith can pierce. Much more is this the case in the Old Testament revelation. According to the wise saying of the Rabbis—in which lies the germ of all right Biblical interpretation, and which, had it been duly attended to, might have saved the Rabbis themselves, as well as generations of Christians, from grievous mistakes—"*the Law speaks in the tongue of the sons of men.*" Scripture ought always to have been interpreted with direct primary reference to what must have been the original meaning and intention of those who wrote, and of those who received it. It *has* been for centuries interpreted with reference to dogmatic bias and traditional conceptions. Ignorance of the laws which govern all the highest utterances of human thought and passion; ignorance alike of the "syllogism of grammar" and of the "syllogism of emotion;" neglect of th original languages in which Scripture was written; neglect of the circumstances by which its writers were surrounded; neglect of it as a whole, and of its books as separate wholes, and even of the context which alone gives the due meaning to its isolated expressions—these, and many other forms of theological carelessness, have led sometimes to an unintelligent literalism, sometimes to a spiritualising extravagance, which, while it could not indeed wholly frustrate the purpose of God by robbing

[1] As, for instance, the Book of Jasher, Josh. x. 13; the Book of the Acts of Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 41; the Book of the Wars of the Lord, Numb. xxi. 14; and others, 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xx. 34, &c.

[2] The very name Bible implies that it is a library, for it is derived from the plural Biblia, and means "the books." In Early English literature it is called Biblioþece, as being the great treasure-house of books. St. Jerome, following 2 Macc. ii. 13, speaks of the Bible as "the Sacred Library." It is said that the collective term Biblia is first found in the writings of St. Chrysostom.

[3] Ephes. iii. 10. [4] Heb. i. 3. Haupt on 1 John iv. 8.

mankind of the broad, main truths of his revelation, has yet inflicted a twofold injury. This injury consists partly in the perpetuation of the virulent prejudices and hard errors of a loveless religionism, partly in the reduction of large portions of the Bible to the condition of a seven-sealed book, to be opened and misinterpreted at random by the most incompetent of mankind. Now, by bearing in mind the rich *diversity* of Scripture we not only gain elements of the deepest interest, but we are proceeding on the right path for its due comprehension. We are in a better position for understanding the truth of God when we have studied the peculiarities of the language in which it is embodied, and know something of the individuality with which the expression of it is tinged. To the variety of sources from which the revelation comes is due both the inexhaustible interest of the Bible and its Divine universality. In this it is wholly unlike the sacred books of other religions. It has something for all nations. In reading the Koran we can think only of Arabia; in reading Confucius only of China; in reading the Zend Avesta only of Persia; in reading the Vedas only of Hindostan. But in the Bible we meet with all races, from Arabian troglodytes to Greek poets, from Galilean fishermen to Roman consuls. From Nineveh to Babylon, from Babylon to Damascus, from Damascus to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Tyre, and the isles of the Gentiles, and Athens, and Corinth, and Rome, we see the light of revelation ever streaming westwards through the pages of the Bible, and

"The giant forms of empires on their way
To ruin"

fling their colossal shadows across its pages. The Bible is at once a sacred Iliad and a sacred Odyssey. Now its pages ring with the battles of the warrior, with their confused noise and garments rolled in blood; now the sea is dashing in our faces as we traverse it in the ship of Jonah, or toss a night and day among its breakers with St. Paul. It has indeed deep speculations for the philosophic mind, but for the most part it is intensely concrete. There is in it no stifling system, no chilling gloom, no self-centred absorption, no frozen sea of abstractions. The sanctimonious and heresy-hunting formalism of the Pharisee, the selfish asceticism of the Buddhist, the chill uncertainty of the Confucian, find no sanction here; nor are we placed at the mercy of the systematising refinements of the Schoolman, and the arbitrary tyranny of the Priest. The Bible shows us that religion may be as exquisite as music, as glowing as art, as rich as a gifted nature, as broad as a noble life. It is as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves.

β. Hence, to the Homilist and the Preacher, dulness is an inexcusable fault, and one which should be most earnestly avoided. If the preacher is dull—dull to *all* his hearers—he cannot possibly rouse their consciences or touch their hearts. Dulness might be pardonable if we had no better text-book than the Koran or the Tripitaka, but it is hardly pardonable when our sacred Book is so intensely and widely humanitarian. Where the human, the concrete, and the individual element is introduced, there hearers *must* find something to interest and instruct them; for the experience of one heart is more or less the experience of all hearts, and there is no one who does not sympathise with the multitude in the Roman theatre who rose to shout their delighted applause on hearing the line of the dramatist—

"Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto."

To the Buddhist the incidents, whether real or legendary, in the life of the Buddha Sakya Mouni furnish a theme of endless interest; the Chinese is never tired of even the dry and uneventful records of the biography of Kung foo tze; but the Bible furnishes us with thousands of thrilling incidents, and with human experiences under

the most varied conditions. Not only so, but it comprises the writings of at least fifty different writers who lived in the most widely separated spheres. The voice which speaks to us is now that of a Gentile sorcerer, now that of a suffering prisoner, now that of a conquering king. Lawgivers like Moses, autocrats like Solomon, warriors like Joshua, historians like Samuel, prophets like Isaiah, priests like Ezra and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, poets like David, governors like Nehemiah, exiles like Daniel, peasants like Amos, fishermen like Peter and John, tax-gatherers like Matthew, rabbis like Paul, have all contributed their quota to the sacred page. We may truly say that it is like the great tree of northern fable, whose leaves were the lives of men. It is for this very reason that nations, like birds of the air, shelter themselves under the shadow of it. It is a vine of God's planting, which

"Reacheth to every corner under heaven
Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth;
So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in
The fragrance of its complicated glooms,
And cool impleached twilights."

γ. St. Paul, in the expression to which we have referred, is not the only sacred writer who bids us notice this diversity and progressiveness of Scripture. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls most marked attention to it in the elaborately beautiful introduction to his Epistle. "God," he says, "who *at sundry times and in divers manners* spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Here we have a striking allusion to the difference between the Old Testament and the New. In the New Testament also there is diversity; but whereas there are only *nine* authors for the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, and the great bulk of it is the work of three, on the other hand, for the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament there are at the very least twenty-seven chief authors, and a very much larger number of minor contributors. The two words rendered "at sundry times and in divers manners" are πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως, which might perhaps be rendered "*fragmentarily and multifariously*." As regards the latter adverb, we have already seen that it is illustrated by the singular differences of station and circumstances among those to whom God sent his message of inspiration; but it is yet further illustrated by the different ways in which that message came to them, and in which it is delivered to us. It came sometimes in the facts of history, sometimes in isolated promises, sometimes by Urim, sometimes by dreams and voices and similitudes, sometimes by types and sacrifices, sometimes by prophets specially commissioned. It takes the form now of annals, now of philosophic meditation, now of a sermon, now of an idyl, now of a lyric song. Sometimes it expands, through chapter after chapter, the details of a single day in an individual life; sometimes it crushes into one single clause the sweeping summary of the records of twenty generations. At one time it will give the minutest incidents of one event in a single reign; at another it will heap the dust of oblivion over dynasties of a hundred kings. We may compare its course to that of a stream which sometimes dwindles into a tiny rivulet, and sometimes broadens into an almost shoreless sea. But it is a stream whose fountains lie deep in the everlasting hills. Its sources are hidden in the depths of a past Eternity, and its issues in the depths of a future Eternity. It begins with the chaos of Genesis, "vast and void;" it ends with a book which has been called "the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." [1]

[1] Milton.

But in this diversity, so important and so precious, we are led also to recognise another point of the extremest value for a right estimate of the Old Testament revelations—namely, its fragmentariness, or *progressiveness*. It was given to us πολυμερῶς—"*in many parts*." The revelation was not given all at once; it was not perfect and final; but God revealed himself to man part by part; he lifted the veil fold by fold. It is grievous to recall how many a blood-stained page of history might have been redeemed from its agony and desolation if men had only remembered that the law of the Old Testament was as yet an imperfect law, and the morality of the Old Testament a not yet fully enlightened morality. When the sanguinary maintainers of shibboleths defended their outrages by the injunctions of the Pentateuch; when the treacherous and infamous assassinations of kings by a Jacques Clement or a Ravaillac were justified by the examples of Ehud and Jael; when the Crusaders thought that they did God service by wading bridle-deep in the blood of "infidels," because they could refer to the exterminating wars of the Book of Judges; when the examples of Samuel and Elijah were quoted to sanction the hideous cruelties of the Inquisition; when the ruinous institutions of polygamy and slavery were supported by the records of the early patriarchs; when texts extravagantly strained were made the chief buttress of immoral despotism; when thousands of poor innocent women were burned as witches on the authority of a text in Leviticus; when atrocious crimes like the massacre of St. Bartholomew were hailed by Popes with acclamation, and paralleled by the zeal for God of olden heroes; when many another error of darkness was defended by "the devil quoting Scripture for his purpose,"—all these follies and iniquities (of which many find their pale reflex and faint analogy even in the present day) could never have occurred if men had studied the Bible in the light of the truths which we have just been considering. And those truths were quite distinctly enunciated not only by St. Paul, the greatest and wisest of the Apostles,[1] but by our blessed Lord himself. In many distinct passages—not to dwell on the spirit and the allusions of many more—he pointed out that the revelation of God was progressive; that even the moral conceptions of the great saints and heroes of the Old Testament were but as the starlight compared to the glory of the risen day.[2] At the very period when the religious authorities of the Jews were more and more degrading into a dead fetish the letter of their law, and that in its most unessential particulars, our Lord drew the most marked contrast between that which had been "said to them of old time" and that which he said to them then.[3] At a period when the distinction between clean and unclean meats was becoming the main badge of the Jew, and an impassable barrier between the Jew and the Gentile, he drew the distinction between real and unreal defilement, and "this he said, . . . making all meats clean."[4] When the washings of Levitic scrupulosity were looked on, not only as a pious and conscientious, but as an absolutely binding development of the laws of ceremonial uncleanness, he openly neglected them, even at the table of a Pharisee.[5] Though the Levitical ordinances came under the direct sanction of inspired authority, he gave his direct approval to the terms in which the great prophets had treated them—not only as essentially transitory, and already in part obsolete, but as having always been of an importance absolutely infinitesimal compared with the weightier matters of the Law.[6] He declined to give any personal sanction to the Mosaic law about the stoning of the adulteress.[7] He said in express terms

[1] As in Gal. iv. 9, and *passim*.
[2] Matt. v. 21—48; Luke ix. 55.
[3] Matt. v. 21, &c., where the true rendering is "to," not "by," them of old time.
[4] Mark vii. 19 (in the true rendering).
[5] Matt. xv. 1; Mark vii. 2.
[6] Matt. xxiii. 23.
[7] John viii. 11.

that the Mosaic concession of polygamy was not in itself good, and had merely been granted to the Jews—as a boon evil indeed, but necessary—because of the hardness of their hearts.[1] Although the sabbath had become to the Jews the very badge of nationality, and was being more and more identified by them with the essence of all religious observances, he markedly and repeatedly discouraged the tendency to strain its sacredness into a burden or a bondage.[2] Lastly, when his own nearest disciples, in the very region where Elijah had called down fire from heaven, appealed to the example of that splendid prophet to justify them in their appeal to him to call down fire from heaven upon those who had insulted his authority, he told them with stern rebuke that the Elijah spirit is not the Christ spirit, and that he had come not to destroy men's lives, but to save.[3] If this teaching of Christ be not reverently borne in mind we shall be constantly tempted to that treatment of the Old Testament which runs through whole modern commentaries, and which, by the straining of words and the invention of hypotheses, aims at concealing all semblance of difference between the tone of a Moses and of a St. John, or between the degree of enlightenment in the moral conduct of a Jael or a Mary of Bethany. Nothing but confusion, dishonesty, and retrogression can come of the attempt to elevate the mixed and imperfect conceptions of early Judaism to the dignity of gospel morality. To act thus is to assert that the stars yield as much light whereby to guide our footsteps as we receive from the Sun of righteousness when it has dawned into boundless day. Scripture has itself made clear to us, in words as plain as it is possible to utter, that the degree both of religion and morality which was vouchsafed to the patriarchs was altogether inferior to that which has been granted to us. "By what law would you justify the atrocity you would commit?" asks the young soldier in a great work of fiction. "If thou art ignorant of it," replied Burley, "thy companion is well aware of the law which gave the men of Jericho to the sword of Joshua, the son of Nun." "Yes; but we," answered the divine, "live under a better dispensation, which instructeth us to return good for evil, and to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us."[4]

8. It will be hardly necessary to warn the Christian homilist that he must beware of recoiling into the opposite extreme. He is not indeed likely to fall into the error of Marcion, whose famous 'Antitheses' dwelt upon and exaggerated the supposed contradictions between the Old and New Testament with the express object of supporting his heresy—that the old dipensation was the work not of God, but of an inferior and imperfect Demiurgus;—but he *may* be led to underrate the unspeakable value of the Old Testament Scriptures. The unity of the Old and New Testaments is found in the person and work of Christ. *Thus* it is that "the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and the New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man."[5] Nothing is more remarkable in the Old Testament, nothing is a more distinct and irrefragable proof of its inspired authority, than this interdependence of the two dispensations—"the Old Testament containing the germ and nucleus of the New, the New containing the realisation and fulfilment of the Old, not as a matter of contrivance, but as a matter of broad and patent history, so that the two parts correspond like a cloven tally."[6] We must avoid alike the heresy of those Gnostics who saw *nothing* of the New Testament in the Old, and the error of unwise controversialists who see *everything* of the New Testament in the Old. But the old rule is true,

[1] Mark x. 4. [2] Mark ii. 27; Luke xiii. 15, &c. [3] Luke ix. 55.
[4] Scott, 'Old Mortality.' [5] Article. [6] Professor Leathes.

that "In Vetere Testamento Novum latet; in Novo Testamento Vetus patet." The fact that, from the days of Origen onwards, allegory and typology have been exaggerated to a most artificial extent, and that many events and allusions and customs have been made prophetic of Christ in which nothing of prophecy was intended,[1] must not blind us to the fact that the Old Testament is full of Christ; for the very heart and essence of the Old Dispensation, as its features are exhibited in the writings of historians, lawgivers, and prophets, was the great and unquenchable Messianic hope. In the Old Testament Christ is prefigured; in the New he is revealed. In his teaching we see in all their fulness those constant elements which all religion strives more and more clearly to express—the holiness and love of God, the dignity and brotherhood of man. And so he stands at the centre of all history as the fulfilment of all the yearnings of the past, the justification of all the hopes of the future. Apart from him all the deepest elements of the Old Testament become unintelligible. The Law is but the slave which leads us to his school.[2] He is the bruiser of the serpent's head in Genesis,[3] and the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne in Revelation;[4] he is the Paschal Lamb of Moses;[5] the true star and sceptre of Balaam's vision;[6] the promised Son of David;[7] Isaiah's rod of the stem of Jesse;[8] him whose testimony is the spirit of prophecy,[9] and of whom bear all the prophets witness, as many as have spoken from Samuel and those that follow after.[10] The due comprehension of this vast hope, and the power of unfolding it, will be one of the highest results which can reward the study of the preacher who desires to fulfil the duty of a wise scribe by drawing from his treasures things old as well as new.[11] By studying the Bible in this spirit we shall make the New Testament an inspired Targum of the Old; the Old Testament will become to us as the New, and the New as the Old.

II. But, to turn to the second point which I mentioned as one of primary importance, every preacher is certain to be led into constant errors who makes a habit of using texts without a faithful study of the context from which they are taken. Thousands of readers attach an entirely erroneous meaning to isolated expressions from forgetting that their true bearing can often only be understood in connection with the train of thought to which they belong. The sacred writers never contemplated the splitting up of their writings into these multitudinous and often arbitrary divisions. Those divisions are mere conveniences for purposes of reference, and owe their origin to the exigencies of the concordance.[12] No one who has not looked into the subject can be at all aware of the multitudes of "texts" which are habitually employed in senses which they never originally bore; or of the absolute recklessness with which they are constantly misapplied, even by professed divines. Sometimes this misuse is so far harmless that the truth into the service of which the text is impressed finds abundant support from other passages; but even in that case the habit springs up of the preacher using the words of prophet or evangelist, not in their proper sense, but as a sort of mask through which more authoritatively to utter thoughts which are not those of the sacred writer, but are his own.[13] I cannot more directly illustrate this fact than by showing that even the very texts which are

[1] The writings of the Fathers—notably of Origen, of St. Hilary of Poictiers, and even of St. Jerome and St. Augustine—are full of the most strained and untenable allegories.

[2] Gal. iii. 21. [3] Gen. iii. 15. [4] Rev. v. 6.

[5] Exod. xii. [6] Numb. xxiv. 17. [7] Mark x. 48, &c.

[8] Isa. xi. 1. [9] Rev. xix. 10. [10] Acts x. 43.

[11] But useful for this line of study we may recommend the beautiful treatise of Davison, 'On Prophecy.'

[12] See on this subject the article Bible in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible.'

[13] I have illustrated this danger in two papers on 'Wresting the Scriptures' in the 'Expositor' for July and August, 1880.

often used to enforce rules of sound Biblical interpretation are in several instances misinterpreted or misapplied. We should attend, it is said, to the spirit, not to the letter, for "*the letter killeth.*" We should interpret "*according to the proportion of faith.*" We should imitate the Divine method by teaching "*precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line;* here a little, and there a little." We should remember that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." Now these remarks and suggestions may be true and wise, but in every one of these instances the text is misapplied, and a glance at the context will show that it is so. The expression "the letter killeth"[1] applies primarily to the sentence of death passed upon transgressors by the Mosaic law. The use of the expression "according to the proportion" (or analogy) "of faith" as a rule for the exposition of the Scriptures, is only a secondary and incorrect application of it; for "the faith" spoken of is not faith in the sense of the system of religion, but is subjective faith, and St. Paul is speaking of preaching within the limits of the spiritual gifts which we have received.[2] "Line upon line, precept upon precept," is so far from being an inspired description of the method of God's revelations, that it is a taunting mimicry of Isaiah's manner,[3] used to ridicule him by the drunken priests of Judah. Lastly, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" is a translation which is so far from certain that it has been regarded as untenable by a very large number of orthodox and learned commentators from the days of Origen down to our own, and both the Syriac, St. Jerome, and Luther render it "all inspired scripture is useful also for doctrine," &c.[4] The misuse of this little group of texts, all referring to one subject—and that the very subject of the right method of Scriptural interpretation, which should surely not be formulated in terms of Scriptural misinterpretation—will at least serve to show the need for carefulness. For indeed the necessity for such carefulness is much greater when important doctrines are made to rest their main support on such texts as, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint;"[5] or, "which of us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"[6] or, "in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be;" or, "cursed be Canaan;"[7] or indeed in a multitude of other texts which, as is proved by the context, have not, and could never have been intended to have, the controversial significance which has been attached to them. It has indeed been an unauthorised superstition, and one which has been prolific of error, to assert that "every passage of the Bible looks backward and forward and every way, like lights from the sun." It is a dogma which does not find in Scripture itself the faintest shadow of authorisation; it is due to that irreverent reverence which ends in superseding in favour of its own arbitrary fancies the professed object of its devotion; its final result is to hand over the Bible to the autocratic manipulation of prejudice and fancy, instead of demanding the toilsome and unbiassed discovery of its true meaning. Texts have been compared to those flints which, when struck open by the hammer, reveal a Drusic cavity full of crystals of the colour of amethyst, "purple with a dawn such as never was on land and sea." The comparison is as true as it is beautiful; but such rich contents will never be found—though they may be invented and imagined—by any student who does not study each text in its due place and under its proper relations.

III. After having endeavoured to show the importance of these broad principles of interpretation—and I have signalled them out as the most neglected and the most

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 6. [2] Rom. xii. 6. [3] Isa. xxviii. 10.

[4] 2 Tim. iii. 16. It was so taken by Origen, Clement Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and most of the Fathers · and by the Peshito, Arabic, and Vulgate; by Luther, &c.

[5] Isa. i. 5. [6] Isa. xxxiii. 14. [7] Gen. ix. 25.

important on which I could touch—it may now be useful to give a brief glance, from a homiletic point of view, at the great divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The earliest trace of a classification of the Old Testament books is found in the Prologue to the Book of Ecclesiasticus, where we are told that Jesus, the son of Sirac, "had much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and other books of our fathers." In 2 Macc. ii. 13 we are told how Nehemiah, "founding a library, gathered together the acts of the kings, and the prophets, and of David." This is clearly analogous to the division referred to by our Lord in Luke xxiv. 44, "in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms." More frequently, however, the Jews, when speaking generally, comprised the Old Testament Scriptures under the head of the Law and the Prophets (Matt. v. 17; Luke xxiv. 25). When entering more into detail they added "the writings" (Cethubim or Hagiographa). The Law (*Torah*) comprised the five books of the Pentateuch. The Prophets were divided into two classes—earlier and later. Under the head of Earlier Prophets the Jews placed the Books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. Under the Later Prophets they placed the three major prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—and the twelve minor prophets. The Cethubim, again, were ranged under three divisions, of which the first, called *Emeth* ("truth"), from the initial letters of the three books, comprised Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; the second, the Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, which were called the five Megilloth, from being written on separate "Rolls" for use at particular festivals; the third division contained Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

If we were entering on a critical introduction to the books of the Old Testament, this division—especially the position occupied in it by the Books of Daniel and Chronicles—would be found very important and suggestive. But for our present homiletic purpose it will be more convenient roughly to divide the books of Scripture into—(1) the Law, (2) the historic books, (3) the poetic books, (4) the prophetic books, and (5) the philosophic books. The division is only meant to be a general one for purposes of convenience; for some of the historic books contain prophetic passages, and some of the prophets contain historical sections; and, again, some of the poetic books are also prophetic, and large portions of the prophets are written in strains of the loftiest poetry, as also are parts of the books which we may term philosophic. The *general* divisions are, however, well marked and easily discernible.

1. The five books of the Pentateuch are partly composed of a history—first of the world, and then of the chosen family—up to the time of the entrance into Canaan, and partly of the system of Mosaic legislation.

a. We no sooner open the Book of Genesis than we are met by whole volumes of controversy as to the relations between science and religion, and the supposed contradictions between the results of the one and the declarations of the other. Do such controversies lie within the ordinary sphere of homiletics? We should say decidedly not, and that for many reasons. In the first place, few are competent really to deal with the question, and nothing is more irritating to men of science than to see obvious ignorance assuming the airs of infallibility, and demonstrating the impiousness of proved conclusions, the very elements of which it does not understand. The clergy in so many thousands of instances, in age after age, have so conclusively proved their entire incompetence to decide upon points of science,—they have been so repeatedly forced to modify their interpretations of Scripture in accordance with finally demonstrated and universally accepted truths,—that it is best to rest on the certainty that though exegesis may be erroneous, the scientific *results* which have rewarded centuries of labour have not in a single instance clashed with any truth of

religion. How can they clash, seeing that truth must be truth, and that God reveals himself in the facts of nature no less surely than he reveals himself in his word? If the clergy desire to enter into scientific controversies, first let them acquire the requisite knowledge, and then let them urge their views in the press, or in places where they can be fairly met and criticised. The pulpit is not meant to be a place for doubtful disputations, but for the furtherance of the ends of revelation, which is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."[1] The first nine chapters of Genesis are singularly rich in moral and spiritual lessons. They summarise the history of at least 2000 years in the progress of mankind. In the pulpit, at any rate, we search them not for earthly wisdom, but for heavenly knowledge. Of the physical truths which the finger of God has written on the stars of heaven or carved upon the rocky tablets of the world; of the bands of Jupiter, or the ring of Saturn, or the snowy poles of Mars; of the extinct monsters which once trampled the forests or tempested the seas—a child may now know more than was dreamt by the wisest man of old. But, on the other hand, the nations of the world might have been saved from millenniums of error—not only from Fetish-worship and Devil-worship, but from Pantheism, and Atheism, and Polytheism, and Manicheism, and Materialism, and forms of error compatible with the most advanced culture—by that single verse of Genesis, speaking calmly as a voice out of the depths of eternity: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

β. In the story of the Creation the same truths are prominent, and the truths on which *all* may fix their thoughts are those of a loving Omnipotence and a glorious world. Similarly, in the story of the Fall of Man, while it would be possible to raise any number of perplexities which are incapable of present solution, it would argue a singular blindness if we missed the truth that the fall of Adam and Eve points the lesson of the fall of every man and woman brought into a sinful world. Be it a history or be it an allegory, we are in any case intended to read in it the causes of the loss of innocence, the certain consequences of retribution, and the Divine remedy for sin. And in the promise to Eve of that seed of the woman who should break the serpent's head we hear the first utterance of prophecy, and catch the first gleam of that light and hope which was to brighten into the perfect day. Have we not here the great elements which run through the whole Bible—"law and prophecy; the denunciation of sin and the promise of pardon; the flame which consumes and the light which comforts;" and is not this the whole of the covenant?

γ. We find the same truths repeated, with striking variations, in the story of Cain; and then we see the origin, on the one hand, of polygamy and a godless civilisation in the family of Lamech, and, on the other hand, of religious worship in the family of Seth. This salt of goodness was not, however, sufficient to save the world from moral corruption; and in the narrative of the Deluge we read the great moral truth that there is a point at which nations can fill no fuller the cup of their iniquity—at which God's wrath against corruption must express itself in retributive justice. Yet here again we find the beautiful symbols of mercy and of safety—the saving ark, the dove with the branch of olive plucked off in her mouth, the promise that God will no more smite every living thing; above all, the bow in the cloud as a pledge of mercy. With the family of Noah the story of man begins afresh, and begins with an awful warning against the curse of drunkenness; but the rainbow, which was made to him the sign of a new covenant, flashes and fades throughout

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

the whole of Scripture, and even amid the often terrible visions of the last book of the Bible we catch our last glimpse of it, spanning the throne of God, and "in sight like unto an emerald."[1]

δ. After the remarkable genealogy of nations in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and one glance at the first colossal empires of the East, we are told of the ruin of an attempt to establish an universal dominion. That story of Babel is the Divine sanction of nationality. From that point, through forty chapters, the sacred historian leaves the history of the world to dwell on the records of three biographies. For not only is the individual life sacred to God, but those three patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were the fathers of the chosen people. They lived peaceful and, for the most part, uneventful lives in their pastoral tents; they were but men; they were not sinless; they sometimes fell into acts of cruelty, meanness, and deceit. But even with all their human weaknesses they were men eminently good, and their one great distinguishing feature was faith in God. It is this which, more than anything else, differentiates one life from another. We are helped to grasp the lesson by the striking way in which each one of them is silently contrasted with another who has his good things in this life—Abraham with Lot, Isaac with Ishmael, Jacob with Esau. Few lessons are more instructive than those which spring from drawing out this contrast in its details and in its results. But the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews points out to us the great lesson that it was faith which lit up their characters with every virtue and every grace; it was like one sunbeam brightening jewels of many colours.

ε. It is needless to dwell on the rich symbolism of the historic narrative which runs through the remaining books of the Pentateuch. The burning bush, the plagues of Egypt, the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, Marah and Elim and Kibroth Hattaavah, the darkness and splendour of Sinai, the pillar of cloud and fire, the smitten rock, the brazen serpent, the grand episode of Balaam, the zeal of Phinehas, the death of Moses, the doom to forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan—these are events which arrest our attention, and we can hardly miss their lessons. It is different with the judicial, ceremonial, and political law of the Jews, which occupy so many chapters in these books, and are too much neglected. They were intended to train Israel, and through Israel to train the world, in the knowledge of God as one God, as a Spirit, as eternal, as ever near us, as a God of holiness and justice, and above all as a God of love. The one utterance round which the entire law of Moses may be said to cluster is that in Exod. xxxiv. 5—7, which is the great proclamation of the name of God after the shameful apostasy of the people. The *moral* law—on the unequalled majesty and Divine originality of which we need not now dwell—was meant to reveal his will, and the aim of the *ceremonial* law was to habituate the people to the conception that they must be holy as God is holy, and pure as he is pure. This is the one main object of all the laws about clean and unclean meats, intended to keep Israel as a separate people; and of the long chapters about ceremonial uncleanness, which was meant to be a type of moral, mental, and spiritual uncleanness. This too was the meaning of all the ordinances of worship, which, like the laws of the fringes and the phylacteries, were meant to teach Israel that God was among them, and that therefore they must be pure in heart and obedient in life. If the student will carefully consider the thirteen long chapters of the Book of Exodus which are occupied with details

[1] Rev. iv. 3.

about the tabernacle and the dress of the priests, he will see that there is hardly one of those details, whether of substance, material, or colour, which is not demonstrably symbolical, and which did not tend to the one purpose of witnessing to the presence and holiness of God.[1] This is still more the case with the whole system of sacrifices, of which the meat offerings were eucharistic, the sin offerings propitiatory, and the burnt offerings typical of self-dedication. Although Moses makes no mention of prayer as a part of public worship, yet these sacrifices were preparations for prayer, and were themselves "prayers without words." They said to the Israelite, Show thy thankfulness to God; make thy peace with God; dedicate thy life to God. In the chapter which gives the method of declaring the purification of the leper (Levit. xiv.), and the magnificent ceremonial of the day of atonement, the student will see in its highest development the rich significance of the Levitic law as symbolising man's relationship to God, and God's restoration of fallen man.[2]

ζ. But, further than this, we see in many regulations that in the Old Testament, as in the New, love is the fulfilling of the law. In spite of concessions to rude times and hard hearts, there is a singular tenderness in the spirit of the Mosaic code. There is tenderness to slaves, whom in every way it sheltered from oppression;[3] to the accidental homicide, for whom it provided the cities of refuge;[4] to the poor, whom it protected from cruel usury;[5] to the depressed toilers, whose lands it restored in the Sabbatic year;[6] to the destitute, in whose interest it forbad the hard stripping of the fields, the mean exhaustion of the gleaned vineyards, or the niggardly beating of the topmost olive boughs.[7] There is even tenderness to the dumb animals. To show that God cared even for the falling sparrow and the dumb cattle, the great legislator was bidden to lay down a rule that the heedless boy should not take the mother-bird when he took from the nest her callow young;[8] that the oxen were not to be muzzled when they trod out the corn;[9] and that the ox and ass were not to be yoked together at the plough, that the burden might not fall on the smaller and weaker beast.[10] Even the thrice repeated rule, "Thou shalt not seethe the kid in its mother's milk,"[11] besides the deep warning which it conveys of the horrible sin of destroying human beings by means of their best affections, was rightly interpreted as a reprobation of unfeeling cruelty, because it looks like a hard mockery, an offence against the mercifulness of nature, to seethe the youngling in the very milk which nature had designed for its sustenance;—for "God's tender mercies are over all his works."[12]

2. Turning from the Law to the historical books of the Bible, how rich in all moral lessons is the great narrative which unfolds before us the story of the chosen people. One grand lesson runs through it all—that neither for men nor for nations is there any true life apart from God. There, as in no other books, shall we find the true statesman's manual and the true philosophy of history. It is related that when King Frederic William I. of Prussia asked one of his chaplains to give him in one sentence a proof of Christianity, the chaplain replied, "The Jews, your Majesty." An entire system of evidences of religion lies in that answer. The whole history of Israel may well be called the history of a prodigal—of a prodigal terribly punished yet freely forgiven. "When Israel was a child God loved him, and out of Egypt he called his son. The son grew up. In the days of prosperity he did not choose

[1] See on this subject Bähr's 'Symbolik,' and Kalisch on Exodus. [2] Levit. xvi.
[3] Deut. v. 15; xii. 18, &c. [4] Numb. xxxv. 13. [5] Deut. xxiii. 19; xxiv. 6, &c.
[6] Levit. xxv. 4, &c. [7] Deut. xxiv. 20. [8] Deut. xxii. 6.
[9] Deut. xxv. 4. [10] Deut. xxii. 10. [11] Exod. xxiii. 19. [12] Ps. cxlv. 9.

to keep God in his remembrance. The days of sorrow came, and he flung himself with sincere repentance into his Father's arms." [1] But even over his repentance crept the insincerity of formalism. In the days of his idolatry Israel murdered the prophets; in the days of his Pharisaism he crucified the Christ. Yet through all that long dark tragedy, in which Jehovah and his people were the actors, God's will was being accomplished. The vineyard had been given to the husbandmen for the blessing of the world. They proved unworthy, and were cast out; [2] but "if the casting away of Israel was the reconciling of the world, what shall their receiving be but life from the dead?" [3]

a. No lessons could be more instructive for the homilist than those which he may find abundantly in the scenes and characters of the historic books; but among them the lesson of the history as a whole should not be overlooked. What conceivable explanation is there of the history of the Jews, with their inextinguishable vitality, and the fulfilment again and again of their unquenchable hopes, except the truth that God had chosen them, and that God was with them? They had no righteousness, but were a stiff-necked people. They had no splendid territory, but a strip of barren, narrow, ill-watered land. They had no grand genealogy—a Syrian ready to perish was their father. They were not powerful enough of themselves even to conquer their own small land. They were not united; Ephraim envied Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim. They were not free, but became the prey of nation after nation. They were not a maritime people, for their strip of sea-coast was mostly harbourless, and not their own. They had no commercial industry like Venice or Holland; no art like Greece; no arms like Rome; no colonies like England; no philosophy like Germany. They were constantly starting aside like a broken bow. Yet no power has ever been able to crush, no persecution to destroy them. They have influenced, taught, pervaded mankind. Their sacred book is the sacred book of humanity, their religious ideas are becoming more and more the religious ideas of the race. What explains it all, and alone explains it? Nothing but the truth that "God showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, neither have the heathen knowledge of his law."

β. The period of desert wanderings was to the Jews a special training for their future history. It was meant to transform them from a nation of full-fed slaves into a nation of warriors. With the entrance into Canaan their proper national history begins. In the Old Testament it falls into three epochs—that of the Judges, that of the Kings, and that of the Exile and return. The epoch of the Judges, so rich in heroic incidents, was a period of apparent anarchy, but of secret growth. The lesson which it was designed to teach them was that apart from God the Israelites were helpless and contemptible, but that with God they were happy and strong. Amid wild stories of crime and repentance, of raids and reprisals, of barbarity and generosity, we see, and not least in the exquisite story of Ruth, that the nation was gradually learning its appointed lesson. Then arose one of the greatest men in Jewish annals, the Prophet Samuel. The time for political unity had come, and, acting under God's permission, he reluctantly gave them a king. After the first tentative, which was a failure owing to the character of the passionate and unstable Saul, began the splendid career of David, the true hero of the monarchy and the darling of the people, whose personal ascendancy stamped a type of character on the nation's history. He gave them an army, he gave them a temple, he gave them a psalter, he gave them a capital. The reign of his son Solomon was but the gorgeous com-

[1] Munk. [2] Matt. xxi. 39 [3] Rom. xi. 15.

mencement of a real decadence. It produced the revolt in the reign of Rehoboam. Israel and Judah split asunder for ever. The ten tribes apostatised into calf worship and Baal worship, and for 250 years, through a list of six unhappy dynasties and nineteen unhappy kings, of whom not one was good, their story dragged itself on, through revolts and assassinations, through foreign defeats and civil tumults, with little beyond the grand missions of Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets to shed a gleam on that long agony.[1] Then Assyria carried them away captive, and they disappear among the nations. Judah had twenty-one kings, but they were all of David's house, and some of them, like Hezekiah and Josiah, were conspicuously faithful. But their reformation came too late. The Jews murdered the prophets, and slew those that were sent unto them, and were carried captive to Babylon. Then came the Exile. In Chaldæa they were cured for ever of the temptation to apostasy, and nothing but their hopes, their promises, and their religion could have preserved them from final obliteration. Babylon fell; Persia prevailed. The Jews returned to a land desolated by war, famine, and disease; but they returned settled in the faith, and so "with the unresistible might of weakness they shook the world."[2] The history of Israel has four main heroes—Moses, Samuel, David, Ezra. Moses gave them their freedom and their law. Samuel their order and unity; David their poetry and their power; Ezra gave them a collected literature and a religious education. If David was the founder of Israel as a monarchy, Ezra is the founder of Israel as a Church. But the lesson of the Old Testament history is mainly this—that, whether as a Kingdom or as a Church, the true Israel had but two sources of power and permanence—the law of a Divine holiness, the grasp of a Messianic hope.

3. Poetry is found throughout the Bible, from the song of Lamech in Gen. iv. to the Apocalypse. All who wish really to understand it must of course make themselves acquainted with the general features of that parallelism or "balance,"—the rapid stroke as of alternate wings, "the heaving and sinking as of the human heart,"[3] —of which there are three main forms—cognate, contrasted, or synthetic.[4] It is the rhythm both of thoughts and words. Thought corresponds to thought in repetition, amplification, contrast, or response; like wave answering to wave, each wave different, yet each swayed by the same setting tide of emotion. It is not easy to define the epochs of Hebrew poetry, because of the still unsettled date of certain books, like the Book of Job and the Song of Solomon. We can see that there was a great poetic outburst both at the Exodus and during the period of the Judges, which produced in the song of Deborah one of the most splendid and impassioned poems in the world. But David was pre-eminently the sweet psalmist of Israel. He found Hebrew poetry a wild flower, but "he planted it on Mount Zion, and nurtured it with kingly care." It never quite died away, and even the Exile and return produced some psalms of remarkable sweetness. The Bible contains poems of nearly all kinds. In the Book of Job we have its single drama of unequalled sublimity; in the songs of Moses and of Deborah the grandest pæans to liberty which were ever sung; in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes didactic and philosophic poems of great beauty and wisdom; in the Song of Solomon an exquisite pastoral; in the Lamentations a most pathetic elegy. Epic indeed there is none; but Hebrew history is itself a Divine epic, and in the intense utterances of the prophets and the sweet songs of the

[1] Hosea ii. 4—17; Amos ix. 7. [2] Milton. [3] Ewald.
[4] On this subject see Lowth 'De Sacri poesi Hebræorum,' and Kerdu, 'Geist der Hebr. Poesie.' A good sketch of Hebrew poetry by Mr. Wright may be found in Smith's 'Bible Dict.'

psalmists we have as it were the ivy and the passion-flowers which twine around its bole. But it is in lyric poetry that the Hebrew genius most characteristically displayed itself, and in its songs we have, as Luther said, "a garden in which the fairest flowers bloom, but over which there blow tempestuous winds." And of all the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, its fresh simplicity, its stainless purity, its lofty purpose, its genial cheerfulness, its free universality of tone, none is more remarkable than the fact that it is intensely religious, that it is full of God. What the son of Sirac says of David is true of all the Hebrew poets: "In all his works he praised the Holy One most high with words of glory; with his whole heart he sung songs, and loved him that made him."[1]

4. In turning to the sixteen directly prophetical books of the Bible we are dealing with its most distinctive element. They do not fall into isolated masses, but interpenetrate one another, and form one organic whole. Prophecy—by which is mainly intended impassioned moral teaching, which insists on the certain vindication of great principles by the issue of events overruled by God—runs all through the Bible. "As we watch the weaving of the web (of Hebrew life) we endeavour to trace through it the more conspicuous threads. Long time the eye follows the crimson: it disappears at length; but the golden thread of sacred prophecy stretches to the end."[2] The constant references to the prophets in the New Testament,[3] the marked approval of their teaching by our Lord,[4] his express statement that they prophesied of him,[5] give the Books of the Prophets an immense importance.

To foretell was one of the functions, but was not the main function, of the Prophets. A mere glance at their writings is sufficient to show that they were the moral and spiritual teachers of the people, the interpreters of God's will, the forth-tellers of Divine truth, far more than the foretellers of future circumstances. The horizon of their vision indeed, and especially its Messianic hope, extended even to the distant future; but it was not like the view of a plain outstretched before them, but like that of a mountain chain, towering range after range and peak beyond peak to the crowning glory of one eternal summit—the view of æon after æon, all tending to the one far-off Divine event—the kingdom of God and of his Christ. The Hebrew Prophets were patriots, statesmen, reformers, leaders of the people.

"In them is plainest taught and easiest learnt
What makes a nation happy and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms and lays cities flat."[6]

Their great characteristics — those which give them such an eternal value — are their heroic faith, their unquenchable hope, their inflexible righteousness, the manner in which they rose superior to the petty ritualisms of sacerdotal formalism, and made holiness the test of sincerity in worship.[7] All who would escape the average—all who would feel the sacredness of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice—must learn of them. In them, as in the moral truths which they enunciated, they were the true forerunners of him of whom they prophesied; and he has given his eternal sanction to the truths which they have taught us: "to live and to struggle; to believe with immovable firmness; to hope even when all is dark around us; to trust the voice of God in our inmost consciousness; to speak with boldness and with power."[8]

5. It only remains to touch for one moment on what may be called the philosophic

[1] Ecclus. xlvii. 8. [2] Kuenen, 'The Prophets.' [3] Especially in Matthew's Gospel.
[4] Matt. ix. 13, &c. [5] Luke xxiv. 45. [6] Milton, 'Paradise Regained.'
[7] Hosea vi. 6, &c. [8] Kuenen, 'The Prophets,' *ad fin.*

books of Scripture. It has been a subject of much discussion whether the Jews could be said to have possessed a philosophy or not, and it has been differently decided by different inquirers. But we may venture to give the name of philosophic books to those which specially discuss the perplexed problems of human existence. Of these the three chief are the Books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. All three might be also classed under the poetic books of Scripture, and the problems with which they deal are also touched on in several of the Psalms;[1] but they belong more directly to that practical wisdom which the Hebrews called *chokmah*.

α. The Book of Proverbs contains many of the most valuable results of human experience put into a terse, striking, and often antithetic form. Its earlier and more consecutive chapters (i.—ix.) are strikingly beautiful, and are aglow with the enthusiasm of lofty thought. In the two next sections (chs. x.—xxiv., and xxv.—xxix.) the form is more apothegmatic, and the maxims, especially in the earlier division, move at times on the lower level of prudential advice. The thirtieth chapter is ascribed to the unknown Agur, son of Jakeh, and the thirty-first to King Lemuel, respecting whom we have nothing but conjecture. The book concludes with the famous eulogy on the virtuous woman, which, like some of the later Psalms,[2] is written in the form of an acrostic—a sure sign that, however beautiful, it belongs to the less spontaneous and impassioned order of poetry. But the whole book in its diversified elements is a noble product of Hebrew thought, and furnishes us with a mine of instructive teaching for all classes, but especially for the young.

β. The Book of Ecclesiastes is one of the most singular books of the canon, and one which presents us with problems which have not yet been finally solved. It is invaluable as the faithful record and confession of a life which had been taught by evil that good is best; of a career which had struggled through luxury, sensuality, cynicism, and speculative despair into a firm conviction that to fear God and keep his commandments was the whole duty of man.

γ. Lastly, in the Book of Job, whatever may be the ultimate conclusion as to its date, authorship, and unity, we have a drama of inexhaustible interest, and one which has attracted the attention of many of the greatest thinkers, ancient and modern. The problem of the sufferings of the good does not indeed find in this book its final solution, for many of the best and noblest of mankind have not seen restored, as Job was, to their old prosperity, but have died in anguish, loneliness, and apparent failure. But to the Book of Job we owe, among many other lessons, the most splendid vindication ever written of innocence against the uncharitable suspicion of those who see it overwhelmed with suffering, and the most majestic description of that power and majesty and love of God which are displayed in the works of his hands, and which make us involuntarily exclaim that "though he slay us, yet will we trust in him."

In the celebrated chapel of King's College, Cambridge, the huge windows of stained glass are filled on one side with subjects from the Old Testament, and on the other with subjects from the New; and often on summer days the student who walks on one side may see the windows nearest to him blazing with sunlight which stream through them from the other side. "Whenever," says an ingenious writer, "I thus saw the gospel story shining through the Old Testament story, I thought that it was a figure of what we see in the Bible." And so in truth it is. Both in the Old and the New Testament we have type and symbol, narrative and precept, parable and

[1] Ps. lxxiii. 3, &c.

[2] *E. g.* Ps. xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxv., cxlv.

miracle; but the sunlight, which can alone interpret and glorify their highest meaning, must come from him who is the Light of the world and the Sun of righteousness. It can only come from God in Christ; and he who would understand and interpret Scripture duly to the enlightenment and salvation of men must often breathe the prayer of one of the greatest of earthly thinkers: "To God the Father, God the Word, God the Spirit we pour forth most humble and hearty supplications that he, remembering the calamities of mankind, and the pilgrimage of this our life, in which we wear out days few and evil, would please to open to us new refreshments out of the fountain of his goodness for the alleviating of our miseries. *This also we humbly and earnestly beg, that human things may not prejudice such as are Divine; neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense and the kindling of a greater natural light anything of incredulity or intellectual might may arise in our minds towards Divine mysteries; but rather that by our minds thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject and perfectly given up to the Divine oracles, there may be given unto faith such things as are faith's.*"[1]

[1] Lord Bacon, 'The Student's Prayer.'

THE LEADING PRINCIPLES OF THE

Divine Law as manifested in the Pentateuch.

BY THE

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1. THE PENTATEUCH, or "Fivefold Book," is the name, derived from the Greek (ἡ πεντάτευχος, sc. βίβλος), of that collection of the writings of Moses which forms the first part of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The titles of the several books are also of Greek origin, and were given them by the LXX. translators. In the Hebrew the Pentateuch forms one volume, known to the Jews of all ages as "the Law," (*Torah*); the separate books being divisions or parts of "the *Torah*," merely distinguished by the first or some important word in the opening sentence of each division. At the close of the Pentateuch are the words, "Here end the five fifth-parts of the Law" (*chamishah chomeshe Torah*). It is to be regretted that in our versions of the Bible this unity of "The Law" is somewhat obscured, by all notice of that significant name, common to all the five parts, being omitted. If it were retained, a very interesting and instructive parallelism in the structure of the two Testaments would be more obvious than it now is. It would be apparent that the Book of "the Law" holds the same relation to the Old Testament Scriptures as the four Gospels bear to the New. In each case the first portion of the sacred volume is a part complete in itself, the basis of the covenant or Divine economy, and bearing its characteristic name: "the Law" being the exponent of the relations between God and man by nature, "the Gospel" of those which are constituted in the incarnate Son. Similarly, the historical books of the Old Testament, describing the history of the chosen people from the giving of the law till the spirit of prophecy ceased, have their parallel in the brief history of the Church of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles; while the prophetical books of the Old Testament, being not merely predictions of future events, but also inspired expositions of the moral and spiritual principles of the Law, correspond to the Apostolic Epistles and the Apocalypse, which are in both cases a revelation of God by his Spirit in the spirit of man.

2. The purpose of this Introduction is to investigate the distinctive character of the Pentateuch as containing what, throughout the Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament, is called "the law," or the "law of Jehovah." The profound importance not only to Christian theology, but to all true religion, of a definite and comprehensive knowledge of this subject must be admitted by every one who receives Holy Scripture as the word of God and the rule of faith and practice. The

truths are all based on those profound relations between the law and the gospel, which he discusses so fully and exactly in his Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans. And it must be remembered that while no one so clearly exhibits the law, in its aspect of law, as the opposite pole to the gospel, yet it is St. Paul, the assertor of Christian liberty against the bondage of law, who says, as his Divine Master said in other words, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."[1] St. Peter says of the epistles of his brother apostle, that in them there are many things "hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned (ἀμαθεῖς) and unstable wrest to their own destruction."[2] And undoubtedly much of the misunderstanding and imperfect apprehension of these epistles, which has been prevalent in all ages of the Church, has been due to vague and inexact notions as to the Divine law. Certainly, without distinct conceptions and definite knowledge on this important subject, the foundations not only of Christian ethics, but of Christian doctrine, can be very insufficiently laid.

5. As the argument in this Introduction is purely theological, or, more strictly, theosophical,—if a much-abused term may be used in its true and proper sense of that which treats of the philosophy of religion,—it is neither necessary nor expedient to encumber it with any critical questions, except those which may be required for illustration of the argument. That the Pentateuch is what it claims to be, that is, of Mosaic origin,[3] and given by inspiration of God, is therefore assumed. It is sufficient for our purpose that it is recognised as such in other writings of the Old Testament, and was so received by Christ himself and his apostles, and is therefore so accepted by his Church. The book was, according to the account it gives of itself, in the first instance compiled and written out by Moses for the use of that nation of Israel, which, as is recorded in this Book of the Law, God had chosen out of all nations of the earth to be in covenant with himself. It was committed to the charge of the priesthood, as the "book of the covenant," to be preserved by the side of the ark of the covenant; and portions of it were to be read publicly to the people every seventh year, at one of their most solemn festivals, as a testimony of the covenant between God and the nation.[4] This was the primary purpose of the *Torah*, to be the Divine standard of a national religion; but, as we have already concluded from our Lord's teaching and from the office of St. Paul, it was written not for one nation only, but for mankind. Indeed we might draw the same conclusion from the book itself, in which the history of the chosen nation is but an episode in the history of man, all whose families were ultimately to receive the blessings of the seed of Abraham. How far particular laws given to the nation of Israel were given as suitable to their circumstances and for that age, and how far they are of universal obligation, can only be ascertained when the principles on which they were founded are determined. And, further, in what sense any of these, which were law in the fullest sense under the covenant of law, are law under a higher and better covenant, can only be determined through that knowledge of the second covenant, with which the New Testament supplies us.

6. For it must be observed here that there is an ambiguity in the use of the term "law" which causes much confusion at times, and which it will be necessary to preclude in our present argument. The definitions of law which are sometimes given are far too general and comprehensive to be of any value for this investi-

[1] Rom. iii. 31. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

[3] Of course this does not imply either that Moses did not make use of more ancient documents, or that the book was not revised by Ezra or others who had authority.

[4] Deut. xxxi. 9—13.

Christ, that very serious errors, even among those who are zealous for the "great things of God's law," may arise from the habit of treating the law given by Moses cursorily and superficially, as hardly necessary to us in the clearer light of the gospel. They remind us that much, which to the careless student seems utterly insignificant, may be found, if studied reverently as part of a Divine revelation, and so as to discern the underlying spirit, to be profitable to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Is it not possible that many of our theological and ecclesiastical differences might disappear, if the law of the Lord were more generally studied among Christians in such a spirit, and if its teachings in lesser matters were not set aside, as they are too often, by the feeling that they must be unsuitable for Christian thought and for the gospel dispensation? St. Paul, we know, drew an inference as to the will of God in respect to the support of the ministry in Christ's Church from the spirit of "one of these least commandments:" "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn."[1] Might not the careful investigation of other commandments and ordinances[2] of the law—if only we believed, as our Lord taught, that the spirit and animating principle of all these without exception is for all ages and circumstances to the end of time—lead to the solution of many controverted questions, and thus direct Christians to the fulfilment of that great intercessory prayer of our Redeemer for all that should believe on him: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."[3] In the examination of the *Torah* in this introduction it will of course be impossible to do more than illustrate the principles of interpretation, to which our Lord's words point, in some of the more obvious instances. But the necessity for reverence, patience, and spiritual understanding which his warning implies may well suggest the prayer of the Psalmist: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."[4]

4. Besides the express teaching of the Divine Founder of our faith, there is one very significant fact in the history of Christianity which of itself is sufficient to prove the paramount importance, to a complete apprehension of the principles of Christ's kingdom, of exact and definite knowledge on the subject of "the law." In addition to the twelve apostles, who were associated with Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, and whose office it was to give testimony as eye-witnesses to those facts which are the objects of our faith and the substance of his gospel,[5] and who are thus, next to Christ himself, the very foundation-stones of the Church, another apostle was subsequently raised up, and specially commissioned and endowed for an office supplementary to theirs. The man selected for this work was one who from his youth up had been trained in the knowledge of the *Torah*, and of all the traditions of his nation. He says of himself that he had made progress in this learning above many of those of his own age; he was exceeding zealous for the law, and "touching the righteousness which is in the law," so far as its letter was concerned, he was "blameless." It may, however, seem strange that such training should be any preparation for that peculiar sphere of thought and action to which the Apostle Paul was called, namely, to expound to Jews and Gentiles those spiritual truths which, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, he derived from the life and death and resurrection of the Son of God in our nature. St. Paul, in fact, held somewhat the same relation to the twelve as in the Old Testament "the prophets" held to Moses and "the law." But we are able to understand the value and meaning of St. Paul's preparation for his special work when we find that his reasonings on these spiritual

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10: 1 Tim. v. 18. [2] Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 13. [3] John xvii. 21.
[4] Ps. cxix. 18. [5] Cf. in proof of this 1 Cor. xv. 1—7.

Mosaic teaching. When we pass to the New Testament we find that Christ more than once refers expressly to the primal state of man as supplying the standard by which the law itself must be interpreted. These cases we shall examine hereafter. St. Paul and other apostolic writers not unfrequently base duties which man owes, both to God and in the mutual relations of human life, not on any positive law or on responsibilities formed by redemption, but on those principles, antecedent to all law, which are involved in creation and its teachings.[1] But even without such authority it would be impossible not to conclude that a true history of man's origin must include and involve the fundamental principles of his duty both to God and to his neighbour. For these duties must be founded on the relations between God and man, and between man and man. And whatever relations might be formed, and responsibilities arise out of these relations, during the subsequent history of mankind, those which are involved in his origin must be primary, and all that are subsequently developed must have their basis in them.

8. (I.) It is evident, for example, that the first element in God's relation to us, the foundation of his universal and absolute authority, is that which the very first sentence of the book of the law expresses: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The eternity of God, his almighty power, his infinite superiority to all things created, are all revealed in those few words. In the rest of the first chapter of Genesis the process of the creation by the will and word and spirit of God is described in language which is necessarily symbolical and ideal, because no other language could represent the operations of the eternal and infinite God. It was not, we are there taught, by a solitary and immediate exercise of power that the universe assumed the form which we now behold. Through successive periods of the creative energy of God, and of the expression of the Divine mind, gradually from the dark and formless void, in due order and in connected sequences, all the manifold existences of the universe, the forms of dead matter, living organisms, vegetable and animal, are evolved after their several kinds. All the truths as to the being of God on which his law is founded, are implied in this work of creation. Nothing in heaven or earth is self-existent and eternal but God only. All being and all personality are derived from God and subsist in God. Nature is but the effect of which he is the cause. His unity is manifested in the unity and continuity of creation from its beginning to its consummation; his reason in its order and in the harmony and mutual adaptations of its infinitely varied parts; his Divine power and energy in the causation through which this universal order has been developed. Another general conclusion from creation is specially indicated by St. Paul as antecedent to all law, being manifested (he says) to man in God's visible works *ever since creation*,[2] viz. that he, being eternal and of infinite power, must be one who cannot be represented by any material form, so that idolatry, no less than polytheism, is a contradiction of his being.

9. (II.) But no less essential to the foundation of man's duty both to God and to his neighbour,—essential indeed as being the reason why there can be any such thing as religion and morality,—is that relation of man to God which was established in the origin of the human race. Of all this marvellous work, the creation of man is the climax and consummation. In the sublime representation given in the sacred record, we ascend from a state of chaos, through the successive stages of the development of the universe, to man, for whom this earth had been prepared as his habitation.[3] As

[1] Cf. *e. g.* Acts xiv. 15, xvii. 24, 25; Rom. i. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 7—9; 1 Tim. ii. 12—14, iv. 3, 4; James iii. 9.

[2] *ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου*, Rom. i. 20.

[3] Isa. xlv. 18.

marking distinctly that man, in his bodily nature, is related to the rest of created being, which has in him its completion, the creation of man has not a day to itself;[1] it is not separated from the creation of the lower animals even so widely as that is from the creation of the vegetable kingdom. Man is reminded that he has, in common with other animals, a material frame composed of the same constituents as theirs; that his body is but the perfection of animal organisation; indeed, that in some respects the very beasts of the field are his superiors, if he does not realise his own true position as man. On this side of man's nature lie those dangers and temptations which are of all the most common, and to mankind in general the most powerful. But in the complete revelation of man's origin, his physical relation to the animal and material world is far less distinctly marked than his relation to God. In his creation it is no longer, "God said; and it was so;" or, "God said, Let the earth bring forth; and it was so;" but "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "So God created man in his image; in the image of God created he him." The creation of man therefore as one who, though possessing an animal nature, is yet in his entire being allied to the infinite and eternal God, is an act of a different order from that of calling into existence the phenomena of the visible universe, and the varied forms of organic life. He who is ushered on the stage of created being by so solemn a preparation is the son of God, the representative upon the earth of the Creator himself, who commits to him charge and authority over all his works.

10. That these remarkable words, "the image of God," do not mean only a state of spiritual and moral purity,—although without doubt such must be the initial and normal state of one thus created,—we must certainly infer from the fact that the same words are used of man, after his fall from this state of purity, both in the Old Testament and in the New.[2] They undoubtedly imply that man is not like the rest of creation, formed and determined by his environments. He has reason to judge, spirit to enlighten him, will to determine him, and is therefore responsible to God for his actions. He has a personality which gives every individual man personal rights; he is an end in himself, and cannot, like other creatures, be used merely as means to an end; his life has a sacredness almost Divine, and he has a dignity and authority resembling that of him whose offspring he is.[3] But all these results and consequences of man's state by creation have been more or less obscured, if not interrupted, by his fall. It is important, therefore, that we should look beyond all the indications of the image of God in man, whether in his reason or his conscience, to the fact itself of that mysterious relation between man and his infinitely holy and glorious Creator, which was constituted by his creation in the image and likeness of God. This relation is evidently the source—(*a*) Of all the duties which man owes to God of love, of belief, of obedience, and of the imitation of God,[4] his heavenly Father. (*b*) Of duties which he owes to his brother man as being equally with himself, by his origin, a son of God. Those rights of man which are called natural, as belonging equally to the whole human race, and which are sometimes represented as a discovery of modern philosophy, have no rational basis whatever except in that relation to God which all men of all nations and classes possess alike by their

[1] Augustin. 'De Genesi Imp. Lib.' § 55. Hic animadvertenda quædam et conjunctio, et discretio animalium. Nam eodem die factum hominem dicit quo bestias.
[2] Gen. ix. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 7; cf. James iii. 9.
[3] Compare Ps. lxxxii. 6; "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High," and our Lord's comment on this, John x. 34—36.
[4] Cf. 'Hooker's Fourth Class of Laws,' § 6, *supra*.

nature, a relation which "the law" given by God through Moses first expressly revealed.

11. (III.) But the history of creation supplies the foundation not only of the relations between God and man, and of each man with every other individual of the human race, but also of the social relations of the various members of the human family. For there is another peculiarity in the account of man's creation which we might have overlooked, had not Christ himself in his teaching specially directed attention to its force and meaning.[1] When a question was asked him on the subject of marriage, he answered, "Have ye not read, that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female?"[2] This expression is not used, it must be observed, in describing the creation of animals. The force of the words is explained in that full description of some parts of the work of creation which is given in the second chapter of Genesis.[3] From this we learn that "Adam was first formed, then Eve"; that "the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man":[4] from which the apostle Paul infers the authority of man over woman. The description given in Genesis,—whatever the process may have been which is represented by woman having been formed by God out of man,—explains to us why the words quoted by our Lord have such profound significance. The reality and the force of that relation between the sexes, of which marriage is the expression, could not be taught by volumes of commandments and precepts as they are by this mystical but simple history of the creation of man and woman. Christ confirms the teaching of that history, asserting that this original unity is the basis of the true unity of those whom "God joins together" in marriage, so that they two are one flesh. Marriage, it will be observed, is not the sexual union merely, but is represented by God *bringing the woman to the man*.[5] And our Lord quotes as the word of God himself the conclusion drawn, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." It follows from all this argument that marriage, the normal type of which is the indissoluble union of one man with one woman, is the exponent of a relation between the sexes involved in their very origin, and that this ordinance, being antecedent to law, is the basis of all those rights and responsibilities which the Divine law maintains and defines. And it must be further observed, that this ordinance is the source not merely of human life, as indicated by the name given to the first woman,[6] but of human society. Without it there might have been a race of men, as of beasts, birds, and fishes; but the family, the unit of the social system, and thus of national life, could not have been formed. There could have been no civilisation and no progress. To the development of man as a social being marriage is essential, and the more nearly that the primal type of marriage is preserved in any nation, the stronger are all the social ties, and the more progressive is its social system. For from it all the duties, not only of the marriage relation itself, but of all other social relations, are derived. The fact that God ordained that mankind should increase and multiply on the earth through a holy union, which he appointed and blessed, determines also the mutual duties and responsibilities of parents and children, which are only limited, as the language of the sacred history indicates, by those which the husband and wife mutually owe to one another, and those which all owe alike to God.

12. (IV.) Thus far in the brief history of man's creation and original state, we

[1] Matt. xix. 4—6; Mark x. 6.
[2] Gen. i. 27; v. 2.
[3] Gen. ii. 18, 20—24.
[4] 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9; 1 Tim. ii. 13.
[5] Gen. ii. 22. It must be remembered, however, that in one sense the language of Genesis applies even to unholy unions; 1 Cor. vi. 16.
[6] *Chavvah.*

have found a basis for all those fundamental principles of religion and morality which the universal conscience of man cannot but recognise. We trace distinctly the lines of a Divine order, to which the nature of man, created as he is in God's image and likeness, itself bears witness. But it is certain, not only from the experience of man in his fallen condition, but from considerations that would equally apply if sin had never entered the world, that, for the maintenance of the religious life in man, more is required than all these principles which may be inferred from his natural relations to God and to the rest of mankind. The very charge committed to man by his Maker, of subduing the earth and exercising dominion therein, in fulfilling which man imitates the Creator so far as his limited powers enable him, would have itself interfered with the development of his spiritual life, even in his state of innocence, unless there had been some provision for the culture and sustenance of that life. This was made by the revelation of God as an example to man in his resting, as well as in his working. Of course it is not to be supposed that by the words, "God rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had made," the idea is meant to be conveyed to our minds, either that God needed repose as we need it, or that with him "who inhabiteth eternity" there is succession of days and times. He is indeed in one sense ever working,[1] and in another ever resting. But during the six days of creation his work had gradually proceeded to its consummation, and all being now completed and set in order and pronounced to be very good, that exercise of the Divine Will and Reason which distinguished the operation of God's power in creating the heavens and the earth and all that are therein, from his providential government of them, ceased.[1] The Genesis was accomplished; nature, which itself subsists in God,—for in him all things live and move and have their being,—and which is the effect of a series of causations which all centre in him,—had attained a determined form and order which bore the same relation to those that preceded as the newborn infant bears to the embryo. This is the first and most obvious meaning of the rest of God. It also seems, as Augustine suggests,[3] that God's resting *from* the work of creation is intended to imply that these created things were not such as he could rest *in*.[4] However, the rest of God is not merely negative. In the Epistle to the Hebrews,[5] the apostle reminds those who were familiar with the teaching of the Old Testament, that this rest of God, of which the law speaks as succeeding to the work of creation, is the very rest promised to all that believe, of which the rest of the Israelites in the land into which Joshua brought them was a figure, of which David speaks in the Psalms as yet in prospect, into which we must still labour to enter by faith in God's promises, for the enjoyment of that rest[6] is reserved for the people of God when they shall have ceased from their earthly labours. From this argument of the apostle we must conclude that the seventh day of God's rest, which followed the six days of his work of creation, is not yet completed. It must be noticed indeed that after the mention of the seventh day the words do not recur, which are used of all the preceding days, and which, whatever be their exact meaning, imply that each had its beginning and its close. This rest of God, therefore, while it precludes the continued exercise of

[1] John v. 17; cf. Isa. xl. 28.

[2] Cf. Thom. Aq. 'Summæ Prim. Quæst.' LXXIII. iii.: "Dicendum quod requies Dei in die septima dupliciter accipitur: primo quidem quantum ad hoc quod cessavit a novis operibus condendis; ita tamen quod creaturam conditam conservat et administrat. Alio modo secundum quod post opera requievit in seipso."

[3] 'De Genesi ad Literam,' IV. xv.

[4] Cf. the beautiful idea in Zeph. iii. 17, "He will rest in his love." But the word there is not *shabath*, rest from labour, but *charash*, be at peace or silent.

[5] Chap. iii. 11 to iv. 11.

[6] σαββατισμός.

creative power, includes the whole of the work of redemption, a work in a higher sphere of spiritual power, and more truly Divine, and one which, except in the eternal counsels of the Almighty, in which it was ordained before the foundations of the earth were laid, could not begin until the first Adam had been created as the τύπος, the form in outliue as it were, of that Divine man who should be hereafter revealed.

13. These considerations fully explain, so far as it can be explained, the mystery of the seventh day and its sanctification. What the days of God's working and God's rest mean in relation to his eternal being is beyond our knowledge; but in our imitation of God we must regard them as represented by the days of our short life on earth. Man being the son of God is to follow God's example alike in his working and his resting. The seventh day is sanctified for resting *from* those labours that belong to things seen and temporal, *in* those pursuits that pertain to things unseen and eternal. Both the works of man and the rest of man in his earthly life are intended to prepare him for the rest of God. As a fundamental principle in the natural constitution of man, this sanctification of the seventh day implies that those powers of body and mind, which he exercises in subduing the earth and having dominion over it, require for their refreshment and perfection not only that cessation from labour which is provided by the succession of evening and morning, of night and day, but periodical rest of a different kind. As a religious principle it is also as obviously that, for the invigoration and development of the spiritual life in man, a definite portion of time should be periodically set apart and consecrated to God as the Lord of our spirits, and devoted to those things tnat belong to a spiritual world. It is hardly necessary to point out that this interpretation of the sanctification of the seventh day is altogether different from the idea that, from the creation, a *particular* day, a certain time of the earth's revolution on its axis, was holier than others; this is to make of an ordinance antecedent to all law what St. Paul calls a "carnal commandment." On the other hand, if it be thought that the determining of one day in seven for a day of rest must be, from its very nature, an artificial and arbitrary appointment, and therefore inconsistent with a Divine and universal order, it must be remembered, not only that the fact of a sevenfold division occurring so frequently in Holy Scripture seems to indicate some corresponding reality in the Divine order beyond the range of our understanding, but also that he who created man must know, as we cannot know, what proportions of man's life are required for physical rest and spiritual activity, in order to preserve the truc *equilibrium* of that life. Experience has abundantly proved of how great value this primeval ordinance is for the physical, moral, and religious welfare of man, and how full of profound truth are those words of our Blessed Lord, when in regard to this question, as on another occasion in reference to marriage, he directed those who were zealous for the law to the original ordinance as the true interpretationof the law: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."[1]

As our argument here is simply that the law (in the sense of a Divine order) of *rest* on the seventh day, after God's example, is involved in the history of creation, even as the true law of marriage is in the union of the first man and the first woman, it is unnecessary to enter into the question whether the Sabbath was observed in

[1] St. Mark ii. 27. That Christ here referred to the ordinance from the beginning, and not to the Mosaical law, is obvious from the word ἐγένετο which is used both of the Sabbath and of man. Οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος [ἐγένετο], cannot mean anything else than "man was not *created*" for the Sabbath, and would be no reason at all in reference to a Jewish ordinance.

patriarchal times before the giving of the Mosaic law. It is sufficient to say, on the one hand, that both in the Scriptural history of man during that period, and in many nations of the Gentile world even to the present day, indications are found of a hebdomadal division of time,[1] which cannot easily be accounted for unless it were the result of some primeval tradition; on the other, that there is no intimation in the sacred history that this ordinance was given to man as a law, in the proper sense of the word, and, therefore, we need not be surprised that it was obscured and almost forgotten, even as other fundamental principles of religion were, when there was nothing to give it a definite and permanent form.

14. The history of the creation of man contains then, we find, all the elementary principles of his religious and moral duty, and (what we may call) the elementary provision for the order of his own life. It is indeed an internal evidence of no small weight to the Divine origin of the sacred history, that in this brief and so to speak condensed record, in which events of the largest import and the most profound significance are described in a few simple sentences, without any attempt to expound the mysterious truths hidden in the story, or to extract moral and religious instruction from it, much less to build up some system of religion upon the facts recorded—yet there are involved all the rudimentary truths both of religion and of morality. But it is necessary to observe, that in man's original state none of these were or could be laws in the strict sense of the word, that is, commands or prohibitions with promises attached to obedience, and threats of punishment for transgression. This Divine order, to which man's own nature belonged, required no law to enforce it on man. Created in God's image and likeness, good and pure in body, soul, and spirit, there was no temptation to him to depart from that order, nor any need for commands and prohibitions to restrain him from the sins to which we are liable. Not only had sin not entered into the world, but there was no concupiscence or tendency to sin.[2] The lamb requires no chain to prevent it from ravening as the wolf.

15. Yet if this had been all; if man had been left simply in a state of innocence, with no temptation, no trial of his submission to the will of God, merely living according to his own pure nature, without any necessity to deny himself and exercise self-control, how could he have rendered reasonable and willing obedience, the true service of the spirit, to God his Father? how could he ever have become what God certainly purposed that he should become, when he created him in his own likeness? We may affirm without any hesitation, since this was the method actually adopted in the wisdom and goodness of God, that it was essential to the spiritual development of man that he should be subject to some law by which he might be educated as a son of God, and might render spiritual obedience. And, as far as we can judge, the law suitable for one in such a condition, that is, for one in the infancy of his moral and spiritual life, must take the form of a prohibition of some act, not in itself evil,—for that would be contrary to his nature and therefore no trial of obedience,—but indifferent in itself, yet such as his own nature might incline him to, with a penalty attached to the transgression of the law. And further, if we consider this law of paradise, as we must in order to understand its reason and its force, in the light of the subsequent history of mankind, and of the teaching of St. Paul as to the purposes and the effect of the law given by Moses, it seems impossible not to conclude that the law given to man in his state of innocency was necessary, not only for the development

[1] I am informed by a learned Chinese friend, that although amongst them the hebdomadal division is not retained, yet, according to one of their sacred books, the I-King, or 'Book of Changes,' "the revolution of the order of the universe is completed in seven days."
[2] Cf. Gen. ii. 25.

of his spiritual life, but also in order that man, having a body by nature mortal, might have life in that body. There is nothing to indicate that man's body, though free from concupiscence and sin, would naturally, without that righteousness which is the result of obedience to a law, be exempt from the decay and dissolution to which all material creation is naturally subject. Indeed the sacred history itself intimates as much by the "tree of life" being planted in the midst of the garden as the "sacrament" of man's preservation from natural death, of which tree he might eat so long as he obeyed the command not to eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil."[1] We know indeed that the effect of the transgression was that man became like the rest of the animal creation in this respect, losing his right to "the tree of life;" and the converse, viz. that the obedience was required in order to entitle him to that right, seems to follow of necessity. On the other hand, we might infer from St. Paul's arguments, that while this law was necessary for man, in order that by obedience he might attain righteousness and life,[2] yet its effect on human nature, even though pure from sin, must have been somewhat the same as the law produced on sinful man; that is, that the command being a prohibition of that which was naturally desired, would of itself provoke transgression, even as the strength of the current is felt only when it is resisted. So that man in his natural state, though free from sinful passion, yet being destitute of that wisdom which experience alone can give, and of that supernatural grace which Christ's redemption alone can supply,— being also spiritually in a state of *unstable equilibrium*, in which the least deviation would create the tendency to decline further, while there was no power of recovery,—sooner or later could not but fall. Infidelity raises superficial objections against the sacred history, as if it were inconsistent with God's wisdom and justice that man should have been subjected to temptation, and again that the consequences of an act apparently so insignificant should have been so serious. But on the contrary, the difficulty really is to conceive it possible that the original history of man, a reasonable and spiritual being with a material nature, could have been, consistently with the goodness and wisdom of an Almighty Creator, other than that which Holy Scripture describes. Such a being *not* created with a pure and sinless nature; one with moral and spiritual faculties to be developed, *not* under some law; one with an animal nature *not* subject to the natural laws of decay and death, unless freedom from them should be gained as the reward of obedience; and one, thus constituted, *not* liable to fall and lose the reward, we may even say not certain to fall sooner or later;—all such hypotheses present difficulties to human thought far more serious than any that can be raised out of the sacred history.

And, it must be observed, these questions which we have discussed are not some curious, but unprofitable, speculations. They touch most nearly, and practically, the whole subject of the law, and illustrate very forcibly the necessity, on which the Apostle Paul so much insists, of an economy not of law but of grace, in order that man, even in his best state, may obtain righteousness and life.

Law from Adam to Moses.

16. No reverent reader of Holy Scripture can fail to recognise the profound insight into the moral and spiritual nature of man which is revealed in the history of

[1] S. August. 'De Gen. ad Lit.' vi. 36: "Denique non ait Apostolus, Corpus quidem mortale propter peccatum; sed *corpus mortuum propter peccatum*. Illud quippe, ante peccatum, et mortale secundum aliam et immortale secundum aliam causam dici poterat: id est mortale, quia poterat mori, immortale quia poterat non mori . . . quod ei præstabatur de ligno vitæ, non de constitutione naturæ; a quo ligno separatus est cum peccasset," *etc.*

[2] Cf. Gal. iii. 21.

the Fall. We need not dwell on this further than as it affects our argument. The necessity for some external and positive law in paradise we have concluded from general considerations, as well as from some to which the teachings of the New Testament direct us. The force and meaning of the particular prohibition are apparent from the story itself. While there is no sufficient reason for questioning its literal truth, and supposing that it is only a myth or allegory, yet we must ever bear in mind that in Holy Scripture it is not the letter but "the spirit that profiteth," though the letter is the vase that holds the precious ointment. We must observe, then, in this case, that the prohibition was to eat of the "tree of *knowledge of good and evil.*" The temptation, though acting through the fleshly appetite, was addressed to the spirit;[1] "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And such was the result. Their eyes *were* opened, though first of all to their own shame, through the sense of evil in themselves and the consciousness of their own alienation from God by transgression. But it must be remembered that in itself the knowledge of good and evil is a higher spiritual state than one of ignorance of the difference between them. This knowledge is indeed an essential condition to all spiritual wisdom.[2] "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," are the words of God himself, and to suppose that this is irony is to misapprehend the whole philosophy of the fall of man. And it might be supposed that now man, possessing the power to distinguish between good and evil, the principles also of all religious and moral duty having been established in his creation, would henceforth need no external law; for he must be a law to himself. But that very knowledge, as the sacred record indicates, and as the subsequent history of the world abundantly proves, was his fall. And the effect of this inward law was the same as that of the law given by Moses, namely, that sin multiplied and abounded. The sin of eating the forbidden tree filled the earth with sin and guilt and death, not only by "the fault and corruption of the nature" of man which was transmitted from Adam by natural generation,[3] but through the necessary consequences of the knowledge of evil. Separated from God by transgression, and conscious of the evil desire in his fleshly nature, man was now out of harmony with the Divine order to which his own nature, as a whole, belonged; and having no inherent ability to restore himself, the knowledge which he possessed gave him no spiritual power, but on the contrary increased his tendency to evil. It was equally true of this inward law, as of the law from Mount Sinai, that because by it was the knowledge of sin,[4] therefore by it man could not obtain righteousness and life. Therefore, as St. Paul says,[5] "*death reigned* from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," that is, who had not, like our first parents, transgressed any positive command of God, but who sinned against "the law written in their hearts,"[6] and justly incurred the condemnation of God. The exceptional cases of men who served God and walked with him and pleased him[7] were the result of a supernatural principle superior to this natural law in man, even of that faith which was in them, as it is in all ages, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In such men the hopes were founded on the tokens of God's goodness and mercy to fallen man, and specially on the promises of redemption and deliverance from evil, which began in the assurance given immediately after the fall, that "the seed of the woman" should after a severe conflict crush the serpent's head.

17. During the antediluvian age, as described in the sacred history, although there are indications of God's manifesting himself to man, yet there are no traces whatever of any law, in the true sense of the word, either human or Divine. The sacrifices

[1] Gen. iii. 4—6. [2] Heb. v. 14. [3] Gen. v. 3. [4] Rom. iii. 20.
[5] Rom. v. 14. [6] Rom. ii. 15. [7] See Heb. xi. 1—7, &c.

that were offered do not appear to have originated in any express command of God, though he may have intimated to Adam himself, as to Abel, his acceptance of such offerings. Abel's offering was accepted as the expression of his faith; but there is nothing to prove that the offering of Cain, though rejected in consequence of his want of faith, was contrary to any law. The murder of Abel by his brother's hand was not punished by death, and the very language of the murderer, in which he complains of the severity of his punishment, points to a general state of lawlessness beyond the immediate "presence of the Lord." Indeed the general description of the world from the Fall to Noah represents a scene of unrestrained disorder and violence. The brief but very significant history of one of the most eminent descendants of Cain is representative of the period. The primeval ordinance of marriage was by him first forsaken. The personal right of the strongest and most powerful to avenge himself to the utmost for every injury is asserted as the only law.[1] The industry and ingenuity and skill of man were highly developed; woman was famous for her beauty; "there were giants in the earth in those days," and "mighty men, men of renown;" but man without law became utterly and hopelessly corrupt, "the wickedness of man was great on the earth," and the disorganised, godless world was destroyed. It was the age of all but universal dominion of the flesh, ending in dissolution and death. At the same time it must be noticed that while ungodliness and irreligion reigned supreme, yet there are no evidences either of idolatry, or of those sins against nature, to which, as the Apostle Paul teaches, God subsequently gave men over as the punishment of idolatry.

18. The world after the Flood began with, what we may call, a new dispensation. Noah, on coming out of the ark, offered burnt sacrifices of every clean beast and every clean fowl—the distinction was probably natural and not ceremonial—his offerings were accepted, a covenant of mercy was established between God and man, and now for the first time in the history of mankind we have some express indication of Divine law revealed for the direction of man. There was first of all a prohibition of eating flesh "with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof," which prohibition (evidently, we may say, when the language is compared with that of the Mosaical law [2]) had reference to the use of the blood in those sacrifices, which had now received express and emphatic sanction from God as an acceptable method of worshipping him.[3] A second law was also given, which springs from the very first duty of man to his brother man—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." But although these two commandments had in many respects the character of law, we do not find the word *torah* used of them; they were rather isolated commands,[4] the first elements and germs of a system of Divine law in which the whole duty of man to God and his neighbour should be comprehended.

19. Yet this beginning of Divine law on earth was, without doubt, of no small value for that which, the sacred history informs us, soon succeeded in this post-diluvian world; namely, the development of national life, of which in the long and dreary age of lawlessness before the Flood there are no signs whatever. The due protection of the person from violence is the first and most important object of that civil law, which is the bond of national order; and it may be well supposed that the consciousness of the necessity of such law, which the Divine command awakened, and of which the past history of the antediluvian world must have supplied abundant evidence,

[1] Gen. iv. 19—24. The interpretation here given to the language of Lamech is certainly the most probable.
[2] Cf. Levit. xvii. 11. [3] Gen. viii. 21.
[4] θέμιστες. Cf. Maine's 'Ancient Law,' p. 4.

gave that strong and general impulse in the direction of national organisation which we find described in the tenth chapter of the Book of Genesis. Of this remarkable movement, so characteristic of this period of the world's history, the ambitious and godless attempt to build a mighty capital of a universal empire, which was frustrated and turned to confusion by Divine interposition, is a signal and instructive instance. If the hypothesis suggested is correct—and certainly it has much appearance of probability—it is also a proof how soon a law given by God for man's benefit may be perverted and turned to evil by the sinful heart of man. And the same may be said of the other law, of a ceremonial nature, given to Noah and his sons. For if it referred to the law of sacrifice, as can hardly be doubted, it must have been the first element of a definite and orderly system of religious worship among the nations that were descended from Noah. And among them religion soon became perverted, and the worship of other gods, and idolatrous practices, of which before there had been no mention, appeared in a few generations after the Flood.[1] And this new development of man's life and man's ungodliness was also followed by those sins which brought God's judgments on Sodom and Gomorrah. It became sufficiently evident, therefore, that although even the first beginnings of law were a benefit to man as regards his present life, yet, to restrain transgressions, a merely rudimentary law was of no avail whatever.

20. The calling of Abram out of this world of idolatry and sin to be the father of a chosen nation, with the promise that in him and his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, was the most important epoch in the spiritual history of man between Adam and Moses. The covenant made with Abram, however, as St. Paul has pointed out,[2] was a covenant not of law but of promise, and was established four or five centuries before the giving of the law. And although circumcision, the seal of that covenant, was an ordinance anticipating the law, and so distinctly embodying its spirit that it became ultimately the most significant emblem of the law; yet, as the apostle reminds the Romans,[3] the father of the faithful received the promises, while yet in uncircumcision, through faith only. However, speaking generally, we may say that with the rite of circumcision, which was in all respects a law, and with the restriction of the covenant to the seed of Abraham in the line of Isaac, the dispensation of the law, properly so called, began. And so far as our argument relates to that dispensation, we might pass over the intervening period between Abraham and Moses, and proceed at once to the consideration of that which is in the fullest and strictest sense the *Torah*, the law of God given by his chosen servant to the nation of Israel.

Development of Human Law without Revelation.

21. But, before we enter on any discussion of this important subject, it will be well first to examine briefly how far, independently of any express revelation from God either to man or through man,—at all events any known to us,—the Divine order, which man being created in God's image to some extent recognises, and against the transgression of which his knowledge of good and evil bears witness, has in different ages of the world been asserted by him in the form of external and positive law. He discovers indeed by his own experience that this order, so far as it affects relations between man and man, is essential to social and national life; and further that the order cannot be maintained, and the rights of these relations cannot be protected, except by law. We need only investigate this subject sufficiently to understand

[1] Josh. xxiv. 2, 14, 15. [2] Gal. iii. 17. [3] Rom. iv. 10—12.

more distinctly on the one hand the value, and indeed the absolute necessity to man's truest and highest life, of a complete revelation of Divine law, and on the other the form which all law must assume in order to be law indeed, and to effect the purposes for which the Divine law itself is given.

22. Not only the sacred history, but also the evidence afforded by the science of comparative jurisprudence[1] indicates that the original constitution of human society was that which is known as the Patriarchal, in which the father of the family possessed absolute authority over its persons and its property. In this condition of society the word of the parent was the only human law, he being the representative of God to the family in religion as well as in secular matters. Traces of this primeval government have survived even to the present day in some nations, in the form known to Roman law as the "Patria Potestas." But as the family life developed itself into the various forms of natural life,—a process which, as we have already observed, began and indeed was in active operation soon after the Deluge,—we find at all events wherever the nation became large and powerful, the national sovereign, succeeding to and superseding the more archaic government. His authority, however, like the paternal, was not that of a mere individual but of the representative of Divinity, and his judgments were regarded as not those of his own personal will but as emanating from above: indeed in the mythical history of ancient nations the original kings are with hardly an exception represented as gods or demi-gods. In regard to Egypt, the only great nation of the period preceding the giving of the law by Moses of which we have any description in the sacred history, we fortunately possess in the present day, in addition to the notices in the Holy Scripture, sufficient information from other contemporaneous records, or from subsequent history, to enable us to trace with some certainty the development of national law there.[2] The Egyptians believed that the origin of law was Divine, the god *Thoth* (or *Hermes* as he was called by the Greeks), who represented the Divine Reason, having first promulgated it for the benefit of man, and their complete code of law being gradually formed by the wisdom of early monarchs and sages, and interpreted from the precedents of the decisions of learned judges in noted cases, which corresponded somewhat to the *Responsa prudentium* of the Romans, and yet more nearly to the "case made" law of later times. This code was called the "Eight Books of Thoth." The study of that code was the special duty of those high priests who were called "prophets," and of the king who also held that office. To the king it belonged to legislate, as well as to administer the law, but in all matters of state he was assisted by the counsel of the wisest and most distinguished members of the priestly order.[3] "We are acquainted with few of the laws of the ancient Egyptians, but the superiority of their legislation has always been acknowledged as the cause of the duration of an empire which lasted with the same form of government for a much longer period than the generality of ancient states. Indeed the wisdom of these people was proverbial, and was held in such consideration by other nations that we find it taken by the Jews as the standard to which superior learning[4] in their own country was willingly compared; and Moses had prepared himself for the duties of a legislator by becoming versed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Wilkinson).

[1] See Maine's 'Ancient Law,' p. 122.

[2] As the facts to which I shall allude are such as are mentioned in many modern works on Egypt, I do not consider it necessary to give references; but I have taken the statements chiefly, and in some cases verbatim, from Sir J. G. Wilkinson's well-known work.

[3] See in illustration Gen. xli. 28, 37, 38; l. 7; and Isa. xix. 11, 12.

[4] Cf. Solomon; 1 Kings iv. 30.

23. The characteristics of Egyptian law, so far as they are known to us, are well worth noticing. The object of the laws was to preserve life and reclaim the offender; and therefore capital punishment was not inflicted except in cases of murder, and of some few other crimes specially injurious to the community. But the crime of murder was considered so heinous, "that to be the accidental witness of an attempt to murder without endeavouring to prevent it was a capital offence which could only be palliated by bringing proof of inability to act." In the same spirit, the witness of any injury to the person of another, or of a robbery, was bound, under the same penalty as the offender himself, to interfere, or, if that was impossible, to be a prosecutor. The only exception to the punishment of death for murder, at least when the royal prerogative was not exercised, was in the case of infanticide by a father, in which, on the principle of the *patria potestas*, a lesser punishment was inflicted. Of other crimes, adultery was severely punished in both the offenders. Truth or justice (personified in the goddess *Thmei*, who possessed both these attributes, and was often represented as a double form), was regarded as the highest of all virtues, "*inasmuch as it related more particularly to others*," while the other virtues immediately benefit him who possesses them. Whenever therefore a falsehood injured another it was punished, as in the Jewish law, according to the *lex talionis*, and when a falsehood against another was maintained by an oath, it became one of the extreme crimes which were punished by death. "For they considered that it involved two distinct crimes—a contempt for the gods and a violation of faith towards man; the former the direct promoter of every sin, the latter destructive of all those ties which are most essential for the welfare of society."

24. The history and character of Egyptian law have been more particularly noticed, both because Egypt was more nearly connected than any other nation with the early history of the people to whom the God of heaven and earth revealed his law, and also because they supply interesting illustrations of our preceding argument, both in regard to the recognition by man of the Divine order, and also as to the need of law, in its true and proper sense, for national life. The subject of man's natural recognition of this order has been largely discussed by modern writers: there is indeed no nation under heaven, civilised or savage, a nomadic tribe or a vast empire like India, from whose traditions or literature illustrations of this truth might not be drawn. But there is one ancient nation of the world, which has been of all the furthest removed, in past ages, from the influences of the religious enlightenment and progressive civilisation of more favoured regions, whose witness to the Divine order, and to its recognition by the spirit of man, specially illustrates our argument, because among them that inward witness is expressly made the basis of national law. According to Bunsen,[1] "the actual aboriginal tribe of the primeval home has settled itself in the extreme east of Asia, and maintained itself there up to the present day; forming the most numerous nation of the world, the oldest in history." The Chinese "language forms an irrefragable testimony to the autochthonous character of the unique position which it occupies. Hence whatever may prove to be an indigenous product of its religious consciousness, is both relatively and intrinsically of high import to universal history. It is the undivided main stream of history as it issues from its parent source, not a mere lagoon." Without accepting Bunsen's theory, it is at all events certain that at a period of very remote antiquity, anterior to the time of Abraham, China had its own language, literature, and polity. Confucius, who lived at the close of the fifth century before Christ, was but the collector of the ancient records and reminiscences of his nation. And in these we find a quite

[1] 'God in History,' Book III. chap. v.

independent confirmation of that which in this argument has been derived simply from the Scripture history of man, viz. that human law, in order to be the basis of national life, must be the assertion of principles of the Divine order which man's nature, as a whole, recognises. I prefer to use the language of another as an independent testimony to this truth:

Following Bunsen, as our latest and probably most trustworthy guide, "let us listen to one or two of the utterances of these sacred books which bear most closely on the point which concerns us. This is from the Shi-King:

"'The opinion and judgment of Heaven is learned (reveals itself) through the opinion and judgment of our people. Heaven's approval and disapproval (is recognised) through the approval and disapproval of our people. An intimate relation subsists between the upper and lower world. Oh, how careful should those be who govern countries!'"

Apropos of this remarkable specimen of antediluvian (?) politics, Bunsen relates an interesting anecdote of our own day. Gutzlaff told him, he says, that "when, after the peace of Nankin, in 1845, the Emperor of China felt himself impelled to refuse his assent to the execution of that treaty by which the Tartar city of Canton was to be opened to foreigners, he justified his repudiation by this great maxim of the sacred books. And 'the voice of the people is the voice of God' resounded once more through the whole empire. When the emperor's edict was published, and everywhere formed the subject of discussion, it was said to Gutzlaff by patriotic Chinese: 'That maxim of our sacred books is well known to us, it is our watchword;' but this was a new thing to us, that the Mandshee emperor should publicly appeal to this sacred text of the Scriptures, which testifies against himself." By what qualifications our primeval ancestors—if such they were—guarded this profound but perilous maxim against the false interpretations which it has received, and still receives, amongst ourselves, we are not informed. But it surely is a *striking* instance of the *consensus* of mankind in their anthropological conceptions, that a maxim which embodies so much, both of the truth and all the falsehood of modern politics, should have been familiar to the ears of what there is reason to believe was the oldest civilised community. * * * * In a subsequent passage he thus sums up their wisdom: "If we sum up the whole, we find one thought continually recurring in the works of all those sages, as the root-idea of the ancient system, and we may express it thus:—There is a law which governs the All in nature and in man, and this one law is reasonable. Thus, indeed, it had been said by Meng-Zo, the renowned successor of Confucius, in the fourth century before our era, 'He who knows *his own nature*, and that of all things, knows what heaven is; for heaven is, indeed, the inward essence and the vital energy of all things.' This thought is the dowry of the Chinese intellect in the general history of man; the conception of a Kosmos *in*, not *above*, the various objects, which, however, attains personality only in the human mind. Man's life is to be orderly, like that of nature; the sphere of this life in which the Chinese recognise something Divine, is that of the family; the bond between parents and children is to him the most sacred of all bonds." In these two conceptions—of the dignity of the person on the one hand, and the sacredness of paternal authority and filial obedience on the other—we have the secret of that marvellous length of days which, notwithstanding all their faults, has been granted to this strange people. * * * * Lest it should be supposed that the view which I have here presented rests on a single authority, it may be proper that I should mention that to whatever extent Baron Bunsen's view of the autochthonous character of the Chinese may be peculiar, his opinion on the point with which we are concerned is the common opinion. All are agreed that the history of Confucius is the most faithful expression of the national mind, and that that teaching was based on the revelations of our common nature. "I teach you nothing," he says, "but what you might learn yourselves, viz. the observance of the three fundamental laws of relation between sovereign and subject, father and child, husband and wife; and the five capital virtues, universal charity, impartial justice, conformity to ceremonies and established usages, rectitude of heart and mind, and pure sincerity."[1]

[1] Lorimer's 'Institutes of Law,' pp. 90, 91.

25. There is, however, another part of the world with the history of which we are more familiar than with those of Egypt, or China, or even of India, and in this history the actual process of the development of law may be more exactly traced from its elementary principles to its matured forms. Maine, in his well-known work on Ancient Law, has pointed out that "the earliest notions connected with the conception, now so fully developed, of a law or rule of life, are those contained in the Homeric words, Themis or Themistes." In the Greek Pantheon Themis is the goddess of justice in the abstract sense, and, according to Hesiod,[1] the mother by Zeus of Dike, the goddess of administrative justice. There can be little doubt that the name is derived from the Egyptian *Thmei* (see § 23, *supra*), and the idea conveyed by the mythology is not really different[2] from that expressed in Homer, with whom Themis is the personification of the order established by custom and equity, and the assessor of Zeus. As such Themis suggested judicial awards both to kings and to gods, the greatest of all kings; and the judgments themselves were called Themistes (the plural of Themis). It is evident that the personification was intended to represent the authority of kings as the representatives of God on earth, and thus the original basis of the idea is the truth, which Revelation supplies, of man being made in the image and likeness of God. From these divinely-directed judgments of kings there grew up in course of time, as the heroic age passed away, a body of unwritten "customary law," which was in the keeping of an aristocracy, civil or religious, invested with judicial authority and privileges. "From the period of customary law we come to another sharply-defined epoch in the history of jurisprudence. We arrive at the era of *Codes*, those ancient codes of which the Twelve Tables of Rome were the most famous specimen. In Greece, in Italy, in the Hellenised sea-board of Western Asia, these codes made their appearance at periods much the same everywhere, not, I mean, at periods identical in point of time, but similar in point of the relative progress of each community. Everywhere, in the countries I have named, laws engraved on tablets and published to the people take the place of usages deposited with the recollection of a privileged obligarchy." * * * "Quite enough too remains of these collections, both in the East and West, to show that they mingled up religious, civil, and merely moral ordinances, without any regard to differences in their essential character; and this is consistent with all we know of early thought from other sources, the severance of law from morality, and of religion from law, belonging very distinctly to the *later* stages of mental progress."[3] The real value to the nation of these codes of law depended much on circumstances. When, as in India, they were compiled at a comparatively late period by a religious oligarchy and remained in their charge, they only tended to perpetuate corruptions and check further development. In Rome, being the result of the struggles of the plebeians against the exclusive privileges of the patricians, and embodying the usages of a more primitive and simple age, their effect was in the highest degree beneficial, both as regards the liberty and the progress of the commonwealth.

26. Of the period in the history of jurisprudence subsequent to this, during which, in the great commonwealth of Rome, human law attained a maturity and perfection such that Roman law has formed a very large and powerful element in the progress and consolidation of the civilisation of modern Europe, it is unnecessary to speak; because the exact and complete provisions for the protection and security of person

[1] At least to the author of the Theogony.

[2] Maine supposes (p. 4) that the mythological notion is "a modern and more developed idea," but the parallel with the Egyptian deity seems to contradict this. The personification of an attribute soon became a deity.

[3] 'Ancient Law,' pp. 14—16, etc.

and property, which are the precious results of fully-developed human law, lie outside the purposes for which the Divine law was necessary. But it must be remembered that Divine law had to fulfil these purposes, as St. Paul teaches us, by its being truly law, and not merely a code of moral and religious precepts. It is therefore of importance to observe what conclusions as to the definite meaning and force of law have been drawn by the human mind with the aid of the experience gained in the development of law. By none in any age has the philosophy of law been more carefully studied, or its terms more exactly defined, than by the ancient Romans. The Roman mind, above all others, was a legal mind. The iron power of the Roman state, to which the modern nations of Europe have succeeded in proportion as they have accepted and assimilated the principles which constituted its strength, was the power of the sovereign authority of law. What, then, is the exact idea of law which presented itself to the Roman mind? The Romans used two words in somewhat the same sense, but by no means as perfectly synonymous, *lex* and *jus; jus* having the wider sense of the two, including often that which is right according to the general principles of justice, while *lex* is law in its strict and proper sense. Cicero ('De Leg.' i. 6) defines *lex* thus: "Quæ scripto sancit quod vult aut jubendo aut vetando." It has been thus defined by a modern scholar: "A law is a rule or command of the sovereign power in a state, published in writing, and addressed to and enforced upon the members of such state; and this is the proper sense of law in Roman writers."[1] This definition is singularly exact and complete. It includes all the elements into which writers[2] on the subject of jurisprudence have resolved every law; viz. "a *command* of the lawgiver, an *obligation* imposed thereby on the citizen, and a *sanction* (or punishment) threatened in the event of disobedience;" the command, which is the first element in law, being a rule which prescribes or forbids, not a single act merely, but all acts of the same kind. There are obviously three ideas, correlative to these three elements, involved in the complete idea of law, and necessary to its perfectness: the supreme *authority* of the lawgiver; his *right* to claim obedience; and his *power* to punish transgression. Only where these are absolute, can law have all its force; *so that it follows, that no law can be law in the fullest and most exact sense of the word except Divine law.*

It is important to bear these conclusions in mind in examining the subject of the giving of the law by Moses, and also in reference to St. Paul's argument respecting Divine law in his Epistle to the Romans. For there can be no doubt that much of that argument derives its force from the true meaning of "law" as understood by the Roman mind. The character of that mind gave a special direction to this exposition of the gospel, which the apostle adapted to the intellectual education of those to whom he was writing; a direction which we find in no other epistle except in that to the Galatians. In that epistle, however, the question of "law" is treated far less generally and philosophically, and rather in reference to a particular question, and to the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Necessity for the Revelation of Divine Law.

27. It is of course impossible to doubt that the development of human law has been, both in its process and in its results, of inestimable value for the education of man as a reasonable being, and specially as enabling him to realise the

[1] The late George Long in article *Lex* in Smith's 'Dictionary of Antiquities.'
[2] Bentham in the 'Fragment on Government,' and Austin in his 'Province of Jurisprudence Determined' (Maine's 'Ancient Law,' p. 7).

mutual duties and responsibilities of all human relations. It is also certain, as has been already intimated, that human aw has indirectly aided religion, by enabling man to understand more clearly, and appreciate more fully, the relations between the Divine law and the gospel of Christ. But it has been only too obvious in the history of the world, that of itself human law has been wholly insufficient—we may even say worse than useless—for the direction of man in his responsibilities to God his Creator, or for preserving among men the true knowledge of God. The history of all the nations of antiquity proves, that the knowledge of God was much sooner, and much more generally, obscured among them than that knowledge of good and evil, which is the basis of human law; while the law, on the other hand, often promoted, or at least sanctioned, superstition and idolatry rather than true religion. In Egypt, for example, the fundamental and original idea was that of one God, not represented by any form; but his attributes were personified under various names, each of which had its own significant form or representation, to which Divine honour and worship were paid. A kind of pantheism became polytheism, and this, recognised by the law, filled the land with the grossest idolatry. Whatever may have been the process in each nation through which the belief in one God became corrupted, it is notorious both that the corruption was universal, and that human law, even when it did not foster the tendency, nowhere prevented the downward movement. St. Paul, in the beginning of his great argument in the Epistle to the Romans, describes how, even among the most civilised and progressive nations of the whole world, such as the Greeks, the knowledge of God, which man possesses through the manifestation of God's eternal power and Divinity in the visible works of creation, was suppressed and perverted. Through their alienation of heart from the living God, "though they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; and they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator."[1] And the result of this apostasy from the worship of the one true God was that he "gave them over to a reprobate mind," a mind incapable of using aright that knowledge of good and evil which it naturally possessed; so that although they knew, of their own selves, without any revelation, what was the judgment of God upon evil in all its varied forms, and that those who did such things were worthy of death, yet they not only committed these evils themselves through the force of temptation, but even lost their consciousness of the distinctions between right and wrong, and approved of those who did evil; a fact of which Greek and Roman literature supplies only too abundant confirmation. Such, St. Paul argues, was the necessity for God's law being given, or (as he expresses it) for the anger of God being "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." That "wrath of God" has indeed to be yet further revealed against all impenitent sinners, whether they have sinned without law or under the law, who reject the mercy and goodness of God. But in the first instance, the revelation of God's wrath against sin, and of his condemnation of it, was made in his law. This was the first and special purpose of the law, to convince man of sin, and compel him to recognise his own transgressions as offences, not only against the order of human society, but against the authority of God, and against the obligations under which we lie to our Creator, these offences rendering us therefore subject to the penalty of death, spiritual and eternal. To produce this effect, however, it was necessary that this revelation should be made in the form, not of religious and moral precepts merely, however holy and good, but

[1] Rom. i. 18—25.

of law in its strictest and fullest sense, as commanded by an authority which man could not question, imposing obligations of all the strongest, and enforced by the sanctions of a power which none could resist.

28. It is important that this definite idea of law should be present to our mind in considering the history of the revelation of Divine law in the *Torah*. We cannot fail to notice that in some of the characters of that history there is a strong resemblance to those of the development of human law. God in his revelations of himself to man before the time of Moses first of all spoke to his chosen people by separate commands and special directions. Religious usages, such as those of the burnt offering and other "sacrifices for God,"[1] the giving of tithes,[2] the erection of altars and of consecrated pillars,[3] and perhaps many other customs not mentioned in the history, which were afterwards embodied in the law, together with the rite of circumcision which had been expressly commanded, no doubt formed an unwritten "customary law," at all events from the time of Abraham; though probably, during the sojourning of the people in the land of Egypt, this traditionary law became corrupted through the admixture of heathen rites and superstitions. At the close of this period God first of all made himself known to them by Moses as the God of Abraham their father, the Eternal and Self-Existent; and, by his judgments upon Egypt, and his deliverance of his people out of the land of their bondage, he established his supreme authority and his special claim on their obedience. And, immediately before they left the scene of their captivity, another step was taken towards the revelation of his law, by the institution of the Passover, and of the various rites and ordinances connected with it.[4] And now the word *Torah*, which before had only once been used in a general way with reference to the obedience of Abraham,[5] is introduced as suitable for the directions given, for the economy of law was beginning. The time had arrived for forming the seed of Abraham into a nation; God, their King and Governor, was to deal with them no longer as individuals, or merely as a family united among themselves by the patriarchal ties, but as his own chosen *nation*. This nation, insignificant as it might appear in comparison with the great kingdoms of this world,[6] was to be mighty, not by the extent of its territory or the number of its population, but as the depositary of God's revelation and of his promises to man, and as the witness on earth to the one living and true God, and to his righteousness. And for this purpose it was necessary that their national life should be based on his law,—a law embodying all those principles of the Divine order which human law represented but partially and imperfectly,—a law with the most absolute authority, the strongest obligations, and the most tremendous sanctions. Of this law the nation was to be in its constitution and organisation the representative to the world.

29. But while this law must be in its fundamental principles the expression of that universal Divine order which is necessary to man as man, yet it was not less essential to the development of the national life of the chosen people, that in its details the law should be suitable for the actual circumstances and condition of that people at the time at which it was given, with such provision for their future condition as the Divine wisdom might see to be required and sufficient. Such considerations point to the conclusion, that to fulfil the several purposes of the law, both as to mankind generally and to the particular nation to whom it was given, that law must be twofold, the *primary* law embodying all the elements of that Divine order which is the immediate result of man's creation and original state; the *secondary*

[1] Exod. xviii. 12. [2] Gen. xiv. 20; xxviii. 22. [3] Gen. xxviii. 22; xxxi. 45.
[4] Exod. xii., xiii. [5] Gen. xxvi. 5. [6] Deut. vii. 7.

law applying the principles of that order to the religious, moral, political, and social life of the nation in such manner as should be best calculated for the true development of that life. That such a distinction as is here indicated is actually found in the law given by God to Israel cannot be questioned; and the very distinction indicates, when the reasons for it are considered, that the laws of the first class are universal and permanent, those of the second special and, except in their spirit, variable. It is, however, very important to observe not only the broad line of distinction which by the mode of their promulgation is drawn between the primary law and the secondary, but also that which is not less apparent on further examination, the relation between the two, with its limitations.

The Primary Law of the Two Tables.

30. The promulgation of the Divine law from Mount Sinai is described twice in the *Torah*, first as part of the history in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus, and a second time, with some slight modifications, in the addresses made by Moses to the people before his death.[1] The event was one, as Moses reminded the Israelites,[2] unparalleled in the history of man ever since the creation of the world. No nation, whatever its traditions and legends may be, has ever even conceived the idea of the God of heaven and earth proclaiming his law to themselves "out of the midst of the fire,"—the light unapproachable, which hid his awful presence from the eyes of man,—with his own voice. At the creation "he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." That was his decree (*Choq*) operative in nature; he now speaks words of law (*Torah*) to man made in his image, demanding the obedience of a reasonable creature. He was afterwards to speak to man in his only begotten Son; a yet more perfect and Divine utterance. But as regards the outward manifestations and visible signs of the majesty, authority, and power of God, the giving of the law from Mount Sinai is an event, so far as we may conclude from Holy Scripture, such as will not again be witnessed until that great day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."[3] Of that terrible day Mount Sinai, as we inferred from the language of the Apostle Paul,[4] was the anticipation and precursor. It is impossible for us to conceive a more solemn expression of the awful holiness of Almighty God, and of the certain and terrible consequences of disobedience to his law, than is contained in the simple but sublime description of the whole scene. The great mountain, before which the hosts of Israel were encamped, itself inspiring awe by its desolate grandeur and the mysterious silence of nature there,[5] after a solemn warning to the people from Jehovah to prepare themselves for this Divine revelation, on the morning of the third day was covered with a thick cloud, out of which proceeded thunderings and lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud,—such as that which at the second coming of the Lord shall awake the dead,—and Israel, trembling with fear, was brought by Moses to the foot of the mountain, which itself quaked at the presence of the Lord, its smoke going up to heaven like the smoke of a furnace. And Moses spake, and God answered him "out of the midst of the fire and the cloud and the darkness,"—the very light was blackness to the eyes of man,[6]—with a great voice. And the voice uttered the ten *words*, the ten brief commandments of the law, which were afterwards written on two tables of stone by no human agency,

[1] Deut. v. [2] Deut. iv. 32, 33. [3] 2 Thess. i 7, 8.
[4] Rom. i. 18 (see § 27, *supra*).
[5] Cf. Stanley's 'Syria and Palestine,' p. 13, 14. [6] See Deut. v. 23.

but by the very finger of God. It is emphatically said by Moses of the law thus given, "And he added no more."

31. What then were these ten solemn *words* proclaimed to the chosen nation by the voice of God with such awful testimonies of his dreadful presence and almighty power? Simple enough they seem to men now. They are indeed nothing else than those elementary principles of religious and moral duty,—which, as we have seen, are involved in man's origin, and which man, awakened to the knowledge of good and evil, ought of himself to recognise,—but now for the first time in man's history asserted as the law of God for man. Though given to one chosen nation in the first instance, and addressed to them by "the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage," yet, as the whole scene testifies, the commands are those of the God of all the earth, the Lord of all nations, the one living and true "God of the spirits of all flesh." And being his law, these commandments, simple as they may seem, cannot be understood aright unless their spirit, and not merely their letter, is recognised. To the outward ear, as to the Scribes and Pharisees of old, they sound merely as prohibitions of some great sins, which the natural conscience of man itself condemns. "All these have I kept from my youth up," is the natural feeling of many now, as of the young ruler in the gospel. It is only when, like St. Paul,[1] we are startled out of our self-righteousness by discovering the spiritual force and infinite comprehensiveness of this Divine law, that each commandment, however often reiterated, suggests the prayer, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law."

32. The spiritual character of the Divine law, as condemning not only outward offences, but the first beginnings of sin within the heart, sufficiently appears from the last of the commandments, to which St. Paul refers as proof of this truth. But there is another principle, applicable to all law in some sense, and to the Divine law emphatically and to the fullest extent, of which it is necessary to have a clear apprehension in order to understand the scope and purport of this law of God. This is, that a law, when it is the expression of a duty, embraces the whole sphere of duties and responsibilities to any part of which it refers; in other words, not only that every command includes the prohibition of that which is opposed to it, which none would deny; but also that every prohibition involves a command to do that which is the opposite. This principle, which even in the science of human law is of no small importance,[2] is absolutely essential to the right interpretation of Divine law, of which the Psalmist truly says, "Thy commandment is *exceeding broad.*" It means that justice covers the whole domain of man's responsibility, there being no distinction, such as some imagine, between perfect and imperfect obligations, but that whatever it is right to do it is wrong to leave undone: there is no middle ground between good and evil; and consequently the principles of justice and of charity or love are identical, requiring of us the same actions, having the same extent and the same limits. This view of the Divine law was obscured in mediæval and later Roman theology by the doctrine of "works of supererogation," works which transcend the sphere of absolute duty and therefore of law, a notion founded on an erroneous conception of justice. Yet even by such theologians it was allowed in theory, that "every human action proceeding from deliberative reason must be either good or bad."[3] Whatever, therefore, it is right to do, it cannot be right, and must be evil, to leave undone. If it be wrong to do any injury to our neighbour, it is right to

[1] Rom. vii. 7—10.
[2] Some thoughts are borrowed from a very interesting discussion of the question in a work to which reference has been already made—Lorimer's 'Institutes of Law,' Book I. xi., xii.
[3] Thom. Aquinas, 'Summæ Theol. Prima Sec. Quæst.' xviii. art. iv. 8.

love him, since this is the principle which alone will prevent us from doing him any injury; and if it is right to love him, it is wrong not to love him. And thus it follows that every commandment of God's law reveals to us all that in that sphere we are either commanded or forbidden to do.[1] But there is indeed no place for theological disputation on this question, though, to make it more clear, its connection with the general subject of law has been noticed. For not only do our Lord and his apostles teach[2] that love is the fulfilling of the law, and the only true fulfilment—in other words, that love and righteousness or justice are in principle identical—but this teaching is that of the Old Testament itself. The words of Moses in the *Torah* are expressly quoted both by Christ and by St. James.[3] It was not, therefore, merely that the fuller light thrown upon the law by the gospel gave it this spiritual character; though no doubt Christ's own teaching, as in the Sermon on the Mount, asserted and expounded this aspect of the law in opposition to the false glosses and unspiritual doctrines of Scribes and Pharisees; but the character was inherent in the law from the first, and was that which made it a living power to man's conscience, "perfect, converting the soul," the source of all truth and all wisdom.

33. It may be asked, however, why, if this be true of the law that every one of its commandments covers so wide a field of responsibility, in so many of them the offence only, and that in its extreme form, is prohibited, while we are left to infer from the prohibition all the positive duties; for example, from the command not to take God's name in vain, the duty of honouring him with our lips; from the prohibition of murder, the duty of caring for our neighbour, and aiding him in sickness and suffering? The sufficient answer to this is, that although the Divine law can only be fulfilled by love, yet it is nevertheless law, and must speak in the proper language of law, in order to fulfil its own stern and terrible functions. Its purpose is to detect, expose, and condemn all sin; and, therefore, those sins are expressly condemned the evil of which is most distinctly recognised by the conscience, in order that we may learn what is the true character of all sins of this class, even of omissions of the duty which we owe to God and our neighbour under this head. We are reminded that if we do not honour God we do not love him, and if we do not love him it is because of the carnal mind which is enmity against God. On the other hand, we learn that "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death" as surely as he that hateth him; and that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know" from the law "that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."[4]

34. Another general remark as to the Divine law is important. It must be observed that while love—to God first of all, and secondly to our neighbour as representing God to us—is the one principle from which all the duties of man are derived, nevertheless law is absolutely essential for man's direction in his earthly life, in order that this principle of spiritual life may not be the vague abstract sentiment of the mystic,

[1] Calvin, 'Instit. Christianæ Religionis,' lib. ii. c. viii. 9: Ita videre est ut semper nobis finis præcepti reseret quidquid illic facere aut jubemur aut vetamur. Calvin, in the passage which concludes with these words, expounds with singular clearness the positive character of the Divine law.

[2] Matt. xxii. 37—40; Mark xii. 29—34; Luke x. 25—28; Rom. xiii. 8—10; James ii. 8.

[3] Deut. vi. 5, and Levit. xix. 18.

[4] 1 John iii. 14, 15. Calvin's exposition of this is characteristic, but very true. "Quia peccatorum fœditatem, nisi ubi palpabilis est, diluere et speciosis prætextibus induere semper caro molitur, (ergo) quod erat in unoquoque transgressionis genere deterrimum et scelestissimum exemplaris loco proposuit, cujus ad auditum sensus quoque exhorresceret, quo majorem peccati cujuslibet detestationem animis nostris imprimeret. Hoc nobis imponit sæpius in æstimandis vitiis, quod si tectiora sunt, elevamus. Has præstigias Dominus discutit quum nos assuefacit universam vitiorum multitudinem ad hæc capita referre quæ optime quantum sit in uno quoque genere abominationis repræsentant." ('Institut.' II. viii. 10.)

but may have a concrete form and substantial reality, through the definite lines of thought, feeling, and action, which law marks out. Or, as that Apostle said, who of all men spoke most fully and most profoundly of love both to God and to man: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."[1] And so the Lord himself said: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."[2] For sublime ideas as to the being and perfections of the Infinite and Eternal, even as to his love, are in themselves too often unfruitful, indeed unreal; the finite mind, not directed by God's commandments, soon loses its hold of these ideas, before their shadowy forms can assume any substance; and perhaps at last *nirvâna* or absorption into deity,—an escape from individual human existence into indefinite, impersonal being,—is the highest hope of the bewildered soul. From all these profitless and dangerous dreams the law is sent to awaken man to realities, that is, to his own duties and responsibilities which he owes to God, the God of love, his Creator and his Father.

35. The purpose of our argument being to mark out the leading principles of the Divine law as revealed in the Pentateuch, rather than to discuss details, it will be unnecessary to enter at length on that which belongs to the office of the commentator or expositor, the interpretation of the several commandments. It will be sufficient to explain briefly the scope of each, and its connection with our previous investigations. That these commandments were *ten* in number is certain from Scripture itself,[3] and it is also certain that the division must be such that in each commandment one distinct principle of law is enunciated, and one only. The question as to the distribution of the ten commandments between the two tables is more difficult to decide and of less practical importance. There is nothing in the history to indicate that there was any distinction between the laws on each table; nor do the words of our Lord which distinguish the first and great commandment as that of love to God, and the second, "like unto it," as love to our neighbour, decide the question. For the two classes of duties so interpenetrate one another, and the whole law so hangs on that which man owes to God, that the attempt to draw any broad line between the commandments that belong to our duty to God, and those that teach our duty to our neighbour, can never be quite satisfactory. For example, the law as to the seventh day is in express words connected with our duty to man as well as with that which we owe to God. The law of filial obedience is, as has often been remarked, a kind of link between our duties to God and to man, for it is as representing God to us that honour is due to parents and others in authority. The prohibition of adultery again cannot but be interpreted to include many sins which are directly offences against God's holiness, but which affect only remotely and indirectly the welfare of our neighbour. Indeed, all those interpretations of the several commandments which are suggested by the general principle of the last of them, *οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις*,[4] introduces the element of our duty to God as that which is primary and most essential. For in *ἐπιθυμία* the first evil is, that it is a desire for that which is not given us by God, or which is not in our path of duty to him;[5] the second evil, which is not always present, that it belongs to our neighbour. Without then attempting to classify the commandments under those which refer to our duty to God and those which contain our

[1] 1 John v. 2, 3. [2] John xiv. 21. Cf. also vers. 15, 23, 24; xv. 10.

[3] Exod. xxxiv. 28; Deut. iv. 13; x. 4.

[4] Cf. Rom. vii. 7. It may be observed that the argument of St. Paul itself is sufficient to prove that the law against *ἐπιθυμία* cannot be divided into two.

[5] Compare our Lord's temptation to turn stones into bread, and again to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple, as illustrations of this.

duty to our neighbour, we will examine them in order, so as to determine the distinct principle which each embodies.

36. (I.) The first commandment, as expressing the most fundamental of all principles, viz. the unity of God, is, in a certain sense, the basis and root of the whole law. In it he who was in covenant with his people Israel, the seed of Abraham his servant, asserts his own eternal and infinite Being, and that he is the only true and living God. The law proper is the prohibition, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."[1] The unity of God is exclusive: he is one, and there is no other: first, and there is no second: alone to be loved, honoured, obeyed, and served, as God.

37. (II.) A second principle, distinct from this of unity, is embodied in the second commandment. God must be worshipped, not as man imagines him, but as he is. Ever since the fall, whenever man has not either denied the existence of God, or forgotten him altogether in fleshly lusts, he has been prone, being incapable of apprehending the idea of the personality of Infinite Spirit, to represent God to himself by those things which are outward and visible; which sin against the very being of God—in its grossest form, the worship of graven images—is prohibited in this law. The language of the commandment, in which those who transgress it are spoken of as "those who *hate* Me," reminds us that this tendency in man is the result of "the carnal mind which is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."[2] This sin, though closely allied to that of serving other gods, so that both are often classed together in Holy Scripture, is undoubtedly not the same. St. Paul, in the passage from the Romans which has already been discussed (§ 25), declares that, of all sins committed by man, this is the most direct insult to the majesty of the Creator, and has most entirely debased man and brought on him that most terrible of all judgments, his being given over by God to his own lusts; and the law itself threatens that this sin must of necessity, in God's government of the world, bring an inheritance of evil for several generations. When we regard this commandment from the other aspect, and consider not only what it forbids but what it commands,—that is, the worship of him who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth,—we find that this subject is necessarily connected, through this law, with the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. He being "the brightness of the glory" of God, and "the express image of his person," was and is, though in the likeness of man, to be worshipped as God, because "in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In him God, though the Infinite Spirit, is fully represented to man; and Jesus Christ, the God-man, alone satisfies those cravings of the human soul which otherwise turn to idolatry. Thus we see that while the negative pole (so to speak) of this law is idolatry, the positive is the worship of God in Christ.

38. (III.) But God demands of man, not merely spiritual service and worship, but also that he should honour God with all that he is, and specially by that which distinguishes man as a reasonable being from all other creatures, and by which his reason expresses itself, that is, by language. The tongue, as we are frequently reminded by the psalmist and others in the Old Testament, and by our Lord and his apostles in the New, is the glory of man when it is used in the service of God, the condemnation of man when language, the overflowing of the heart, is a stream of purposeless or evil words. The third commandment prohibits the highest offence of this class, taking God's name in vain, of which the grossest form is "swearing falsely" And man is so little able to realise the profound and mysterious relation between our words, the expressions of our will and reason, and the mind

[1] Literally "before my face;" that is, *beside* or *in addition to*, not *but* or *instead of* me.
[2] Cf. Rom. viii. 7 and Rom. i. 28, with § 30.

of God, that he specially needs to be reminded that "God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." On the other hand, regarding the law in its positive aspect, we must observe that the whole force and scope of the duty which man owes to God under this head can only be completely expounded from the truth, that not only has the Word of God taken our nature, but also the Spirit of God, who when he first came down on the Church, enabled men to speak in other tongues the high praises of God, has made our bodies and all their members the temples of God. Here the negative pole is "false swearing," the positive "praying in the Holy Ghost."

It seems, therefore, not without reason that S. Augustine and others have regarded the first three commandments of the law, not only as specially representing man's duty to God, but also as related to the three persons of the Godhead.

39. (IV.) In the preceding commandments all the fundamental principles of the service of God are indicated and asserted. But this service, as rendered by man on earth, must want definiteness and form unless Divine law should determine some order and proportion in respect of *time*. The fourth commandment expresses in the form of law the principles in regard to man's use of time which are involved in God's creation of man, and which have been already discussed under that head.[1] It must be noticed that, in this law, the duty of fulfilling during six days the original precept to replenish the earth and subdue it, which involves a very large and important class of practical duties and responsibilities which we owe to God, and not to man only,[2] is as distinctly asserted as the duty of resting from such labours, after the example of our Creator, on the seventh day. The interpretation and application of this law which was suited for the Mosaic dispensation we need not consider, here at least, except to observe that the secondary laws on this subject, by increasing the proportion of days which should be given to religious worship and observed as "Sabbaths," themselves prove that this commandment, as well as all others, though given for the instruction and direction of the conscience, is to be observed by man in the spirit and not in the letter.

Regarding it in this light, we must consider the fourth commandment, in its positive aspect, as indicating the duty of man to devote a sufficient portion of his time to the worship of God and to those pursuits which belong to a spiritual world. What the proportion should be must be determined by the enlightened spirit of the Christian, directed by the law itself, but not interpreting it in the literal and servile spirit of Scribes and Pharisees, which, by drawing a hard and fast line between day and day, would contradict the law itself. On the other hand, in its negative aspect, this law includes duties to our fellow-men, and even to the beasts of the field which labour in the service of man; and the mention of these last proves that the physical value of a periodical day of rest is a principle of this law. It is in this aspect of the Sabbath, as a day of rest for our fellow-men who serve us, that Moses, in reminding the Israelites of this commandment in his last addresses to them,[3] connects it with their deliverance from the land of their bondage, where their Egyptian taskmasters allowed them no rest; and, in reference to this, the particular day fixed for the Sabbath under the Mosaic law, was the day which began with the evening when they came out of Egypt.[4]

40. (V.) Man's duty to God leads to that which he owes to his neighbour, and, as has been already observed, the fifth commandment belongs as much to one class of

[1] See § 12.
[2] Cf. Rom. xii. 11 and Coloss. iii. 23. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men."
[3] Deut. v. 14, 15.
[4] Cf. Exod. xvi.

duties as to the other. For the authority of parents is to be respected and their persons are to be honoured, because they represent God to us, from whom the parental relation is derived and in whom it is constituted.[1] And certainly we may adapt to this case the argument which St. John uses more generally: "He that honoureth not his earthly parents whom he hath seen, how can he honour God, his heavenly Father, whom he hath not seen?" And the family, being a Divine ordinance involved in that of marriage,[2] is, so to speak, God's nursery in which man may be trained from his infancy in those habits of self-control, and in that respect and reverence for authority, without which all the bonds both of social and of natural life are of no avail. The duties which man owes to duly constituted authority in all these spheres are therefore included in this commandment; and it is certain, as indicated in its language, that, in what we understand by God's providential government of the world, the welfare of mankind depends on nothing so much as on that due respect for human authority,[3] as acting for God, and that obedience to law, which are first taught by the parental relation, the ties of which are of all the tenderest, the strongest, and the most sacred.

41. (VI.) The next four commandments of the law are nearly related together, for they all refer to those natural rights of man, which either directly or by necessary inference are derived from his creation. Of these the first of all is man's right to his own existence, as a being created by God in his image, whose life therefore cannot be used merely as means to other ends, for he must be an end in himself. The sixth commandment asserts in the form of law, as had been asserted after the Deluge many centuries before, the intrinsic sacredness of the life of man. In its negative aspect, the prohibition, "Thou shalt do no murder," forbids all those feelings which, if uncontrolled and matured, would end, as Cain's jealousy and anger ended, in murder, and which, even if checked in their course, would tend to the injury of another in some degree. Even the Talmud and other Jewish traditions recognise the truth that minor injuries to our neighbour are, in the eye of God's law, equivalent to murder.[4] On the positive side, this commandment requires that active and practical and loving concern for the lives of our brethren, above all for their spiritual being, the true and eternal life, which must proceed from the full belief of the truth that man is made in the image of God.[5] At the same time it must be remembered that all the rights of man as regards this present life, must from the very nature of the case be limited by the rights of other men; in other words, by those of human society. The principle of the sacredness of man's life is asserted as the basis for all law; the application of the principle, wherever it is not determined (as it was for Israel under special circumstances) by Divine direction, is left to that authority which is "God's minister" for human society.[6]

42. (VII.) The seventh commandment guards man's rights under the ordinance of marriage, the mutual duties and responsibilities of which, as we have already found, the history of man's creation plainly declares. And marriage being ordained for the following reasons,[7]—to take them in the order which its institution in man's state of

[1] Cf. Ephes. iii. 15, Ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται, and vi. 1.

[2] See § 11.

[3] Rom. xiii. 1—7.

[4] "He who makes the face of his neighbour pale with shame is like a man that sheds blood." "He who makes his fellow-creature sin commits a greater crime than the murderer." Quoted by Kalisch on Exod. xx. 13: but the modern, rationalistic Jewish com mentator, in a spirit similar to that of the Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's time, refuses to recognise anything but the letter in the law itself.

[5] Cf. in illustration the remarkable passage, Prov. xxiv. 11, 12, and our Saviour's words, Matt. xvi. 25, 26

[6] Rom. xiii. 4, "He beareth not the sword in vain."

[7] English Marriage Service.

innocence indicates,—first, "for the mutual society, help, and comfort which one ought to have of the other;" secondly, "for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy name;" and thirdly, to preserve the purity of human life against the lusts of the flesh;—the prohibition of the breach of this ordinance by adultery must involve, on its negative side, the prohibition of all things inconsistent with these reasons, and on its positive side, the command to fulfil all the duties and responsibilities which those reasons imply.

43. (VIII.) The eighth commandment deals with another natural right of man, that of property: not, like the two preceding, directly derived from his creation, yet the immediate consequence of his own personal right to existence, and of the rights of the family relation.[1] From these rights of man we conclude his right to acquire and possess such things as pertain to the maintenance and development of life, and to use and dispose of these for the benefit of himself and of those dependent on him. This natural right of man, and the duties involved in it, the commandment recognises and asserts. The whole sphere of these duties, both negative and positive, is included in one of those comprehensive and profoundly philosophical precepts of the Apostle Paul, which we find in his expositions of relative duties. "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."[2] The question of the limitation of the individual right of property by the rights of the society is one that specially belongs to the authority of human law, which is ordained by God for the protection of such rights.[3] The secondary laws on this subject, given to the nation of Israel as suitable for their peculiar circumstances, contain some important and suggestive illustrations of the extent of these rights and of the corresponding duties.

44. (IX.) The right of man to receive the truth from his neighbour, and the correlative duty of man to speak the truth of his neighbour and to his neighbour, arise, so far as human interests are concerned, from the order and constitution of society, the mutual relations and responsibilities of which could not be otherwise maintained.[4] St. Paul, while he describes the old man as corrupt according to the *lusts of deceit*, and the new man as created after God in righteousness and *holiness of truth*, yet expressly bases the duty on the ground of our mutual relation. "Wherefore" (he says), "putting away lying, let every man speak truth one with another; for we are members one of another."[5] This consideration must necessarily to some extent govern the interpretation and application of the ninth commandment; for the same principle that forbids us to bear false witness against our neighbour, would equally require us to bear true witness, even though it be to his personal injury, if the interests of man as a member of society, and the interests of social order, should be thereby benefited. This conclusion is obvious enough. But the question, which has been often discussed both in ancient and modern times, whether veracity is, under all circumstances and to all men, a duty *in itself*, and if not, what are the limitations which the ground of the duty, indicated by St. Paul, might suggest, is one of much greater difficulty, into which we need not enter here.[6] It must, however, be borne in mind with regard to all the four commandments that have reference to the natural rights of man, that while those rights mark out the corresponding duties, there is for the

[1] See Lorimer's 'Constitution of Law,' chap. vii. 3, c—h.
[2] Ephes. iv. 28.
[3] Cf. *e.g.* Rom. xiii. 6, 7.
[4] In this aspect of "truth" it is so closely allied to "justice" that it is difficult to separate them. See § 23 as to the personification of *Thmei.*
[5] Ephes. iv. 22, 25.
[6] See Mozley's 'Ruling Ideas in Early Ages,' pp. 155, &c. and Notes 4—7.

conscience a yet deeper foundation of these duties than any which human interests can supply. For the ethical virtues of love, purity, honesty, and truth are in man the counterpart of God's own perfections, and all that is contrary to these perfections must be, in the nature of things, sinful, because it is the contradiction of his image and likeness.

45. (X.) To all these commandments which relate to the natural rights and duties of man, one, the tenth and last, is added, which enlarges their scope beyond that of all human laws, and marks them as truly Divine; laws in which he who is the Lord of the spirit and the conscience must be regarded. Even in human legislation, indeed, the intention of an act is taken into account, and sometimes even the absence of a due sense of the right and of its corresponding duty—as, for example, in the case of manslaughter, the absence of a sense of the value of human life, and of the duty of caring for it—may make an act criminal even though there is no positive intention to commit a crime. But human law can take no cognisance whatever of the inward thought before it is expressed either in word or in deed. To no one but God himself, the Judge of our spirits, can we be accountable for the angry or malicious feeling, the impure desire, the covetous wish, the deceitful thought and purpose, all which, as St. Paul discovered when the law came home to his conscience, are included under the general prohibition, "Thou shalt not covet."[1] The desire is manifestly unlawful when that which is desired belongs to another, because by this it is certain that it is contrary to the will of God that we should possess it; but also, and no less truly, whenever the desire is not regulated by the Divine order, and subordinate to God's will. Such a desire, like that of Eve before she yielded to the tempter, "hath of itself the nature of sin," and is the harlot mother, as the apostle James reminds us, of all sin and death.[2]

46. The proclamation from Sinai of this law of the ten commandments is one of those events, the vast moral importance of which, as compared with all events in secular history, and indeed with all in sacred history from the Fall to the Incarnation, is, like a great mountain mass the comparative height of which is best distinguished at a distance, realised now that we look back on it through the ages of the past, as it could not be understood at the time when it was first delivered. How little, notwithstanding the awful manifestations of the Divine presence and authority, this law affected the minds of the Israelites at the time, is apparent from the fact that at the foot of Mount Sinai they made and worshipped the golden calf, committing, no doubt unwittingly through the darkness and blindness of their hearts, the very sin of which the voice of God had pronounced the most express and solemn condemnation. And of the spiritual force and meaning of these commandments,[3] although their general conviction that God who gave this law was to be feared is commended by him as in itself good, they evidently had no conception; they had indeed to learn this through the teaching of God's prophets, and his dealings with them as a nation, for many generations; and even to the last they were a foolish people, having eyes that could not see, and ears that could not understand. Now, looking back on the majestic scene from the distance of some thirty-four centuries, and interpreting those Divine

[1] Both the English words *covet* and *lust* have, unfortunately, special meanings. In Greek the words *οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις* forbid every class of evil desire. In the Hebrew a different word is used in Deuteronomy for desiring the neighbour's wife from that employed for coveting his property. According to Kalisch, the Rabbinical distinction between the two words was that *ăvāh* (the word rendered *covet* in Deuteronomy) means the first motion of the evil desire, and *chāmād* that which is fully developed, and produces the sinful deed. But from the use of the words in Deuteronomy we should rather infer the opposite.

[2] See Alford's note on James i. 14, 15.

[3] Cf. Deut. v. 28, 29.

sentences by the light of the knowledge and experience that God has vouchsafed to man during the intervening period, we find in them a profound significance, a completeness, a harmony, and a due proportion of moral and spiritual truth, such as afford proofs of their Divine power and authority, far clearer and more convincing to the enlightened spirit of man, than any that could be given by the most overwhelming outward manifestations of the Divine presence. Who but the living and true God, he to whom is known all that is in the nature of man, and who foresees the end from the beginning—all that would be developed out of that nature in the history of the world—could thus in "ten words" have set forth the fundamental laws of the whole religious and moral order of human life, comprehending the principles necessary for every sphere of man's rights and man's duties, reaching at the same time not only to the outward act, but to the first germs of evil within the heart? Well might Moses, in his recapitulation of the Divine law, while he reminded the people of the privileges which the nation possessed above all other nations in the tokens of the Divine favour which they had received, urge on them, that true national greatness could only be maintained through obedience to the law of their God, especially that which was given "the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb."

47. But is there not an important question here? We have examined the extent of the *commands* of this law of God; we recognise without difficulty the *obligations* imposed thereby; but one thing more is necessary in order that it may be law indeed; there must be "a *sanction*[1] threatened in the event of disobedience." What is the punishment which follows the transgression of the law of God? There can be no difficulty in answering this question. The *sanction* of the law of Paradise was, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" the sentence being carried out, as we have seen (§ 15), by the body of man becoming not only mortal, but "dead because of sin," and his spirit being separated and alienated from God, "dead in sin." Those terrible curses denounced on Israel as a nation,[2] if they did not hearken to the voice of the Lord their God, which Moses called "*the curses of the covenant*,"[3] were the expression of that which no human language can fully express or human thought conceive, the wrath of the Infinitely Holy God against sin. But did the Israelites know and believe that this condemnation of God was not for this life only, but for a life after the death of the body? It is impossible to doubt this. The belief is inherent in the very nature of man, and only obscured in proportion as the belief in the existence of God is obscured. The Egyptians themselves, among whom the Israelites had lived for some centuries, fully believed in judgment after death; and it has been supposed, with some reason, that the silence of Moses on the subject of a future world and of the punishment of sin hereafter may be explained by the danger of the false and superstitious notions as to the future judgment, which formed so large a part of Egyptian religion, being confirmed in the minds of those who had been long familiarised with these errors. This explanation does, at all events, point to the true solution of the difficulty, namely, that the time had not yet come for a clear revelation of the realities of a future world, and therefore, under the dispensation of law, that world was hidden in a mysterious and awful darkness, which was only dispelled very gradually, until our Saviour Jesus Christ abolished

[1] See § 26, *supra*. The particular force of this word, which is a term from Roman law, will be explained by the following passages from Forcellini: "Sanctio legum quæ *certam pœnam* irrogat iis qui," &c. *Papinian*. "Plus valet sanctio permissione *h. e.* lex quæ cogit quam quæ permittit." It implies the solemn confirmation of a law by the penalty or punishment attached to it. Thus Cicero ('De Leg.' lib. iii. c. 20) says: "Noxiæ pœna par esto, ut in suo vitio quisque plectatur, vis capite, avaritia mulcta, honoris cupiditas ignominia sanciatur."

[2] Deut. xxviii. 15, &c.

[3] Deut. xxix. 21; and cf. Deut. xxvii. 26 and Gal. iii. 10.

death, and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."[1] At the same time it must be remembered that Christ himself teaches us that the language of the *Torah* itself implies both the immortality of the soul, and even the resurrection of the body.[2]

The Secondary Laws.

48. If the law given to Israel had consisted only of the ten commandments spoken by the voice of Jehovah from Mount Sinai, this alone would have been an inestimable blessing to the nation. Regarded also as a necessary step in Divine revelation and a preparation for the gospel of Christ, these primary laws of religious and moral duty, proclaimed with the fullest sanctions of Divine authority, and with the curse and condemnation of Almighty God denounced against the sinner, of themselves were sufficient, as is proved by St. Paul's reference to the last of these commandments, to convince man of sin, if only he would understand and apply them to himself, and thus to lead him to Christ "that he might be justified by faith." Why then was it necessary that to this grand and simple law, which was the covenant between God and the nation, there should be superadded other "statutes" and "judgments," which, both from the method in which they were delivered, and from their very nature, are obviously secondary and subordinate? Might not Israel have been now left, as other nations were, to develop for themselves, with the immeasurable advantage of having these commandments to direct them, the laws that might be necessary for their national life? One reply to this question has been given already (§ 29, *supra*). But further it must be answered, that for the complete development of the economy of law, so as to teach God's chosen people, and all nations through them, the real meaning and tremendous force of Divine law, and the impossibility of attaining life through any law, however fully it might provide for all the conditions of man on earth,—very much more was required than this one solemn and authoritative promulgation of its eternal principles. God therefore in his wisdom and goodness gave to Israel not only, directly from himself, these primary laws, but also, through his servant Moses, as a mediator between himself and the nation, a very large body of secondary laws, which were the application and adaptation of the principles of the primary law to the condition and circumstances of Israel at that time. It was necessary, in order to educate them in God's truth, and gradually prepare them for a better and more perfect and enduring covenant, that through these secondary laws the whole religious, social, and domestic life of the nation should be thoroughly permeated by Divine law; that at every step law should meet them with its imperative demands, its warnings, its threatenings, and its promises; that thus the law should never be out of their sight, and never be wanting in that distinctness and definiteness, which, as we well know in human legislation, is of all things most essential to its force. And further, the primary laws being laws for the conscience of man, the penalty of transgressing them is the wrath of God, which, even if it should never be manifested in this life, the awakened conscience recognises. But to bring the force of this home to the mind of man, it was necessary that there should be laws, the transgressions of which should be visited by such punishments as all must feel and fear even in this world. How this principle affected the character of the secondary laws we shall see hereafter. These laws may be divided, for the purpose of examining them, into two great classes, those that directly concern man's relations to God, and those that belong to his duty to his neighbour. But it must be remem-

[1] 2 Tim. i. 10.
[2] See Matt. xxii. 30; Mark xii. 25; and Luke xx. 38, where the remarkable words are added, πάντες γὰρ αὐτῷ ζῶσιν.

bered that no such distinction was made by Moses in delivering them; and, for reasons before explained (§ 35, *supra*), no division of this kind can be completely or scientifically exact.

Religious Laws.

49. Those secondary laws which concern man's relations to God include all that are ritual or ceremonial, or are in any sense religious. In regard to these we must first of all recall to mind some general principles, affecting and governing the whole ritual and ceremonial system, which explain, what otherwise would be unintelligible, the great difference between the outward service of God under the law and that under the gospel, although the fundamental principles of the service of God must be the same in all ages.

(1) The first purpose of these religious laws was, without doubt, that the chosen nation should bear witness in its religion to the one living and true God against the polytheism, idolatry, and superstitions of the other nations of the world, from whom they were to be kept separate as a holy and peculiar people, dedicated to the service of him who had called and chosen the seed of Abraham his servant.

(2) Their outward service of God was not, however, to be something altogether new, as if Jehovah were now for the first time revealed; but in its main elements such as the true worship of God had been from the beginning. He who had chosen them was the Creator of all men, the God of all who, ever since man had been on the earth, had served him by faith. Ever since the Fall, partly from the teachings of man's own conscience, and partly from the express monitions of God's Spirit, certain religious customs had grown up,[1] and one office of the Mosaic legislation was undoubtedly to confirm these usages, so far as they were suitable for that economy, by positive laws, and both to develop them yet further and to guard them against abuses and perversions.

(3) After the Fall, a new element in the relations between God and man of preeminent importance had been revealed; first, in the promise of the final victory of the seed of the woman in the conflict with the enemy of God and man; and afterwards, more definitely, in the promises given to Abraham and his seed. These were to be ultimately fulfilled in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, "born of a woman," "of the seed of Abraham," and "born under the law." This element in the faith of God's people could not but affect in the highest degree the relation to God of his chosen nation, and therefore must enter very largely into the laws which governed the service and worship of God. To be a step forward in God's revelation, these laws must point onwards to the work and offices of the promised Saviour. But at the same time, even more distinctly than they could teach the future realities, they must indicate that the victory not being as yet won, the redemption had not yet come, and the laws must therefore bear distinct witness to their own imperfection and insufficiency.

(4) And lastly, as St. Paul argues in his Epistle to the Galatians, the dispensation of the law being one of discipline and education, corresponding with the training of a child before he comes to the discretion and the rights of manhood,—the children of God, until the time should come for their adoption in Christ, and for that gift of the Spirit which is in the spiritual life what the age of discretion is in the natural life, needed to be taught by "elements of this world," outward and visible ordinances, and disciplined through restraints and the fear of punishment, before the reasons for obedience could be fully understood or explained.

[1] Cf. § 28, *supra*.

These principles are specially exemplified in the sacrificial system, which was the centre of the ceremonial law, and the key to all its observances and requirements. The question of the typical meaning of these, that is, the aspect of the Mosaical rites and ceremonies, when viewed in the full knowledge of the realities of the gospel, as figures of the work of Christ, lies outside our present argument, the object of which is to examine the system simply in its character of law, and, therefore, in the aspect in which it presented itself to those who were under the law. It is, however, important to observe, that in studying the question of the typical and allegorical meaning of Holy Scripture, the only safeguard against fanciful and unprofitable speculations is to be found in the spirit which underlies the letter; for example, in the typical interpretation of the law, by observing first of all the spiritual meaning of the observance *for those to whom it was commanded.*

50. In sacrifice, the primary idea, as represented by the word *minchah,*—originally applied in Scripture[1] to all offerings to God, though limited under the law to vegetable offerings,—is that of a *gift* expressive of the faith and gratitude of the offerer. Yet the truth,—first indicated by God's acceptance of Abel's offering of "the first-fruits of his flock and the fat thereof," then confirmed in the covenant of mercy made with Noah, and afterwards, yet more expressly, by the Divine command given to Abram in the ratification of God's covenant with him,[2]—that the most suitable offering to God was that of a life, not merely to be dedicated to his service, but to be poured out at his altar, certainly involves, and cannot but have conveyed to the mind of the worshipper, the idea of propitiation for sin, and of the forgiveness of sin, through shedding of blood.[3] This mystery of the offering of life as the means of holding communion with a holy God was, no doubt, at first dimly apprehended; yet it could not fail to be associated with the knowledge, which St. Paul[4] says that man has by nature, that sin deserves death. There was, however, one event in the history of the chosen family that must have greatly intensified the mysterious awe with which the burnt offering was regarded; I mean the command given to Abraham to offer up as a burnt sacrifice his own son Isaac in whom the promises were given, followed by the substitution for Isaac of a ram divinely provided. It could not but be felt, hereafter, whenever a sacrifice was offered, that the victim did in some mysterious way represent the promised seed. There is also another idea connected with sacrifice, that of fellowship through eating the flesh of the victim, which it would seem was recognised before the giving of the law,[5] and which certainly was general in the later heathen world. The passover, instituted before the giving of the law, though anticipatory of it and afterwards embodied in it, was specially such a feast of fellowship with God and his people. Thus the ideas associated with sacrifice gradually grew in the minds of God's servants, until the time came when the law should exhibit them more distinctly and definitely, and should not merely through these figures direct the minds of the worshippers to better things to come, but also assert, by Divine authority, the necessity of the principles of worship thus expressed, to the service of the one true God. We need but touch on the several points in which the law affected the worship of God through sacrifice.

51. (1) First, it determined the minister of sacrifice and of all religious offices.

[1] Gen. iv. 3—5. [2] Gen. xv. 8, &c.

[3] See Job i. 5; xlii. 8 as an evidence of the idea of atonement for sin being involved in burnt offerings, independently of the law of Moses.

[4] Rom i. 32.

[5] Cf. Exod. xviii. 12. The word *lechem* which is translated "bread" is simply "food," and the flesh of the sacrifice is frequently called God's *lechem.* Levit. xxii. 30, and *passim;* Mal. i. 7.

In patriarchal times, sacrifices were offered by the head of the family, though the case of Melchizedec and probably also that of Jethro[1] are instances of a priesthood among the servants of the true God; while in heathen lands, as in Egypt, the priests had long held the position of a privileged class. At the time of the giving of the law from Mount Sinai priests are mentioned, before the Levitical priesthood was established, but these were probably, as Jewish interpreters and the Talmud assert, the first-born of the nation, and the same as the "young men of the children of Israel" (Exod. xxiv.) who were appointed by Moses to offer those burnt-offerings and peace-offerings by the blood of which the Sinaitic covenant was ratified. But under the law, while the whole nation of Israel, if they kept God's covenant, was to be "a kingdom of priests,"[2] the sacerdotal functions were restricted henceforth to one family, that of Aaron, the elder brother of Moses; the tribe of Levi, to which Aaron himself belonged, being given to him and his descendants as a substitute for the first-born of the nation, to assist the priests in the service of the tabernacle.[3] Thus the tribe was representative of the whole priestly nation. But it was not only that a priesthood was established; the duties of the priestly office were now strictly defined and their prerogatives jealously guarded by Divine law. We know, from the teaching of the New Testament, that this represented the imperative necessity of a mediator in order that sinful man might draw near to God, and that no man could take that office upon himself but one called of God, as Aaron was;[4] and no devout Israelite could fail to apprehend the general force of that teaching of the law. On the other hand, the selection, by Divine authority, of one tribe,—whether or not it was selected for its zeal against the worshippers of the golden calf,[5]—and of a particular family out of that tribe, was to the nation a test of obedience to law. There were those who were unwilling to submit to this law, because they did not fully understand the reason of the appointment.[6] They said to Moses and Aaron, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." But Israel was taught by terrible proofs that the law of Jehovah was law indeed, and that death was the certain consequence of wilful transgression.

Other limitations made by the law in regard to sacrifices were those of place and time. It was provided that when Israel should have entered into the possession of the promised land, offerings of every kind should be made only "in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to put his name in."[7] The practical purpose in this was obviously to secure both purity of worship and the unity of God's covenant people. This kind of limitation, indeed, as well as that of times and seasons as specially holy, was a principle that entered largely into the religious provisions of the law; but it is unnecessary to our argument to consider these limitations beyond observing, that important as they were, as educating the chosen nation both in the knowledge of God's relation to themselves, and as a test of their obedience to his law, they were indications of an imperfect, and, to the same extent, unspiritual economy, one that could only be a preparation for an enduring and universal covenant.[8]

[1] Exod. iii. 1; xviii. 1, 12. The original meaning of the word *cohen* is "chief" or "prince," and is sometimes used in this sense (see 2 Sam. viii. 18; xx. 26), but in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is translated ἱερεύς.
[2] Exod. xix. 6. [3] Num. viii. 6, &c. [4] Heb. v. 1—4.
[5] Exod. xxxii. 25—29; and cf. ver. 29 with Deut. xxxiii. 9.
[6] Num. xvi. It must be observed that Korah was the son of the second-born of Kohath, and Dathan and Abiram were sons of Eliab, a member of one of the leading families of the tribe of Reuben, cf. Num. xxvi. 8, 9. It is evident that they considered the selection of the priesthood arbitrary.
[7] Deut. xii. 5—11, &c. [8] Cf. St. John iv. 21—27; Gal. iv. 3, 9, 10

52. (2) Again, the law, while adopting generally sacrifice as a suitable method of worshipping God, made very complete and elaborate provisions both as to the ritual of sacrifice, and as to the different kinds of offerings. These regulations, besides guarding against abuses of the rite, were obviously intended, and were calculated in a high degree, to educate the minds of the Israelites through outward symbols, and direct them, as far as was possible, till the redemption should be accomplished, to the true principles of spiritual worship. Among the heathen, the fundamental idea of sacrifice was perverted into the notion that the deity required these gifts; the offering up of a victim into the belief that he delighted in the suffering and death of his creatures; and while sacrifice implied that for communion of sinful man with God more was required than his own obedience, it was easily forgotten that, in themselves, sacrifices were only of value as expressing the faith and love of the offerer. These misapprehensions are so natural to the human mind that, even under the provisions of the law, men were liable to them, although the prophetical writings of the Old Testament contain distinct protests against them.[1] But the law gave no encouragement to such errors,[2] and by its elaborate distinctions directed the mind of the worshipper to truths inconsistent with them.

The animal sacrifices ordained by the law may be divided into three classes, in each of which one distinctive idea was prominent. 1. The burnt sacrifice (generally *'olah*, "that which goes up"), in which the blood was poured out "round about upon the altar," and the whole of the body of the victim with all the fat was burnt on the altar. The prominent idea in this was the free-will offering to God of spiritual worship, of prayer, praise, and adoration. 2. The peace offering (*shelem*, "peace"), in which the blood was used as in the burnt offering and the internal fat (*cheleb*, which was considered the sign of animal perfection and, as well as the blood, forbidden to be eaten) was burnt on the altar; the flesh was eaten partly by the offerer and partly by the priests and their families. The idea here was peace with a reconciled God, and communion with him and his Church. The passover may be considered as belonging to this class. 3. The sin-offering (*chattath*, "sin"), which was the special characteristic, as it was the creation, of the law. In this not only was the blood poured out as in the other sacrifices, but first of all some was put on the horns of the altar, and (when the offering was for the high priest or the whole congregation) also taken into the sanctuary and sprinkled on the vail and the altar of incense; and once in the year, on the great day of atonement, was taken into the holy of holies and sprinkled on (or before) the mercy-seat. The *cheleb* was burnt on the altar of burnt-offering, the flesh was generally eaten by the priests in the holy place, to bear the iniquity of the congregation, and make atonement for them before the Lord.[3] But whenever the blood was taken into the sanctuary, the body was burnt without the camp as utterly unclean and accursed. The idea in offerings of this class was evidently atonement for sin. But it must be observed that in all sacrifices of each of the three classes, atonement was represented by the pouring out of the blood, and the worship of God by burning the fat on the altar.

53. Into further details either of the sacrificial system or of the ceremonial law generally it is unnecessary to enter in this introduction, because that which we have noticed is sufficient to explain distinctly how this branch of the secondary law is connected with the fundamental principles of Divine law, and with the purposes for

[1] Such as Ps. l. 7—15; li. 16, 17; Micah vi. 6—9.

[2] *E. g.* The offerings by fire might be a bullock, sheep, or fowl, or even a handful of flour with oil and frankincense, and yet each was an offering "*of a sweet savour to the Lord.*"

[3] Levit. x. 17.

which it was given to man. Of this ceremonial law it is true that every "jot and tittle" must be fulfilled, not only *by* Christ himself "as born under the law," or *in* Christ as the antitype and substance of these shadows and figures, but, in their spirit, by the disciples of Christ. For the principles of the worship of God, which the ordinances of the ceremonial law embodied and demanded of the Israelites, were the very same as those which are necessary for ourselves. First of all this law, by its minute and strict provisions, required of man that he should recognise and acknowledge himself as a sinner, both in his nature from his birth to his death, and in his daily life. It was not only as an inference from the Sinaitic law that there was "by the law the knowledge of sin," but in the ceremonial system, the perpetual and ever-present exponent of God's law to Israel, sin and death stared man in the face, haunted him day and night, forced their presence upon him even in his holiest hours, compelled him to feel that all real and acceptable worship of a God of holiness and truth must begin with a consciousness that we have transgressed his commandments, and thus, in the emphatic language of St. Paul, "the Scripture," that is the *Torah*, "*shut up* all things under sin."[1] This law again, with equal clearness, continually and definitely required of man that he should worship God through faith in an atonement for sin. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds those to whom he writes[2] that the first covenant (that of the law) was inaugurated in blood;[3] and, he adds, "we may almost say that in blood all things are purified according to the law, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." The pouring out of the blood in every sacrifice was the "outward and visible sign" not of sin merely, but of atonement for sin. And to make it more apparent, through these "elements of the world," what kind of atonement it is on which sinful man can rely, the great sin offerings made once a year on the day of atonement had their blood taken within the Holy of Holies to the very mercy-seat of God, on which the *Shechinah*, the manifested Presence of Jehovah, rested. And yet, the annual repetition of this most significant rite —the most solemn by far of all the ordinances of the law—indicated emphatically that the atonement signified was not thus accomplished, that the blood of the true sacrifice, which would take away sin and satisfy the conscience, had not yet been taken before the true mercy-seat in the heavens, of which that in the tabernacle was but an image and pattern. The law therefore demanded by its ordinances faith in an atonement for sin by a real sacrifice, yet to be revealed, the blood of which must be, when offered, taken into the true Holy of Holies where God is in his glory. That which is required of us is the very same in every respect, save that now the true sacrifice has been finished, and the blood of Christ has been taken by our true High Priest within the veil. The very least of the commandments, which indicated to Israel these principles of acceptable worship to God, embodies that which cannot be neglected by the Christian without spiritual loss. Lastly, through these ordinances, Israel was assured of peace with a reconciled God, and of communion with him and with their brethren through sacrifice. Even the stern economy of law, the direct purpose of which was to make man's sin and guilt more distinctly seen and more keenly felt, yet was no reign of terror, or house of bondage. The son, though under restraints in his childhood, is nevertheless a son; none the less assured of his Father's love; assured that his own offences, though they are severely chastised, do not alienate his Father's heart from him, if only he approach God through the blood of the covenant. Perhaps there is no aspect of the law which is overlooked, or at least not sufficiently appreciated, by Christians so frequently, and with so much loss to their own enjoyment of the blessings of Christ's kingdom, as that which the peace offerings represented to Israel.

[1] Gal. iii. 22. [2] Heb. x. 18—22. [3] See Exod. xxiv. 6—8.

The Civil Laws of the Mosaic Code.

54. Those secondary laws, given by Moses, which were the development and application of the fundamental principles of man's duty to his neighbour, are, as before observed, intermingled in the *Torah* with those of a religious and ceremonial character. The reasons for this we have already considered; and it has been noticed (§ 25) that in the development even of human law, the mingling together of "religious, civil, and merely moral ordinances without any regard to differences in their essential character," is invariably found in the early forms of written law. In the Divine law this was, we may say, necessary; for its authority, being that of God, extended to all these spheres of human life and conduct. It must be observed, also, that even among those which we must consider as the civil laws of the Mosaic code, there are many directed against offences that are far more directly and clearly sins against God and his image in us, than against our neighbour. Under this head fall the most abominable of all crimes,[1] and others which might be considered very trivial offences if our duty to man only were regarded. It is remarkable that drunkenness, a sin of this class, the evil consequences of which to a man himself are exemplified in the sacred history by two most emphatic instances, while its evil results to society are only too well known in the present day, was not the subject of any law, except as connected with other sins,[2] or in reference to sacerdotal duties.[3] Perhaps the abstinence from wine and strong drink required of the priests, "that ye may put difference between holy and unholy and between clean and unclean," was considered sufficient warning of the dangers of excess in those days, and under the circumstances of Oriental life.[4] It is evident, however, both that drunkenness was accounted as a sin,[5] and that, at all events in the times of the kings, it was a sin common both among priests and people. We must, however, restrict ourselves in this examination of the civil laws of Moses to those which distinctly belong to man's duty to his neighbour, and illustrate the leading principles which govern them by some of the most luminous instances.

55. (1) And first, regarding these laws in reference to the one purpose, which, St. Paul teaches us, was paramount in the whole revelation of Divine law, that is, to convince man of sin, not by mere counsels and precepts, but by commands which demanded obedience, and which had the sanction of severe punishment,—we must observe that this purpose itself explains the severity with which offences against the rights of others and the order of society were visited in this code. For example, under the head of honouring parents, the law affixed the punishment of death to smiting, or even cursing, either father or mother. In regard to homicide, wilful murder was punished with death, which could not be commuted into any other penalty; against what would now be called manslaughter the sentence of death was recorded, but in some cases blood-money might be paid as a satisfaction; for accidental homicide the cities of refuge were provided, where the slayer must remain till the death of the high priest. There is some difficulty in reconciling the laws, but it seems most probable that in all cases of homicide, whether wilful, or the result of carelessness, or purely accidental, the Goel, or nearest kinsman, to whom it belonged to execute the sentence, had the right to kill the man-slayer if he found him outside the city; and

[1] Levit. xviii. 22—30. [2] Deut. xxi. 20. [3] Levit. x. 8—10.
[4] It is certain that the Israelites would not learn temperance in Egypt, in which country there was a large consumption of wine, with the usual results among all classes, which are satirically represented in the sculptures.
[5] Cf. 1 Sam. i. 13—16.

that the judges, representing the congregation, determined respecting one who had taken refuge, according to the evidence of witnesses,[1] what the punishment should be. Adultery, even when the woman was only betrothed, was punished by the death of both offenders. Since the most precious possession of man is his own personal liberty, death was the punishment for stealing a man and either selling him or keeping him in bondage. Thefts generally were punished by restitution of either four or five times the value of the thing stolen; but a burglar breaking into a house at night might be slain with impunity. False witness was punished according to the *lex talionis*, the principle of which was also laid down in the law as that on which all cases of personal injury should be punished: "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." [2] This to us now may seem a rude and barbarous principle of justice; but it must be borne in mind that it is the natural and original idea of justice between man and man. The *lex talionis* was recognised in the twelve tables of Rome, and it was expressed in later Roman law in almost the same terms as in the law of Moses. Cicero accepts the general principle as the true basis of penal law; "Noxiæ pœna par esto."[3]

Of the necessity for the adaptation of these secondary laws to the actual moral condition of the people to whom they were given we shall speak presently; but there is another consideration which, from a religious point of view, has yet greater weight; namely, that it was essential to the purpose for which Divine law was given, that the severity, exactness, and inflexible impartiality of the justice of God should be exhibited in that law, and that, under this economy, his people should be taught this lesson, as children are, by a discipline suited to their age. We may ask, however, can a law of this nature be part of that law of which love is the fulfilment? Did not Christ expressly reject this law of retaliation as unsuitable for his disciples, and bid them, on the contrary, return good for evil? Yet he came "not to destroy but to fulfil the law," and we have seen (§ 32) that justice and charity are nothing else than opposite poles of the same principle, and Divine law necessarily involves both. The Scribes and Pharisees, whose false interpretations of God's law Christ condemned, altogether forgot, as many Christians do to the present day, that the "sanction" or penalty of a law is not for the guidance of our conduct and feeling towards others, but to direct those who are the representatives of God's justice on earth. To the personal conscience it is nothing more than a warning of the evil and guilt of the sin. In this particular case, that which the law *commands* us is that we should do unto others as we would that they should do unto us; the *penalty* for disobedience, which it belongs not to us to execute, but to God by those to whom he commits this office, exactly corresponds with the command; that is, it requires that whatever injury we do to others shall be "measured" out with perfect exactness "to us again." Our Lord, while he rejects the false interpretation of the law, asserts the principle of equal-handed justice on which it is founded, as a necessary and inviolable principle in God's government.[4] And without the distinct recognition of God's justice, charity is a barren sentiment. The soul that has not a deep conviction of the exact and inviolable justice of God, can have no real, or at least no profound sense of his love; and, therefore, no sufficient foundation for that love to his neighbour which alone fulfils the law. In fact, these severe penal laws are nothing else than the expression of God's righteous condemnation of him who does not love his neighbour as himself.

[1] Cf. Numb. xxxv. 12.
[2] Exod. xxi. 23—25; Levit. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21.
[3] See note, § 47, *supra*.
[4] Cf. Matt. vii. 2 with ver. 7.

56. (2) But to realise this it is important that we should look at these civil laws of Moses from a different aspect from that of their "sanctions." Few Christians, even though reverent students of the Bible, sufficiently appreciate the fact that these laws do embody, and sometimes express in the very words, those principles of law which our Lord taught in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, and which are the Christian rule of life, though not enforced on us by particular commandments (for we are not under an economy of law), but to be fulfilled in the freedom of the spirit. It will be sufficient to notice a few emphatic instances of this.

(*a*) The following general precept is identical with the teaching of the gospel: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him (*or*, not bear sin for him).[1] Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Levit. xix. 17, 18).

(*b*) The Scribes and Pharisees misinterpreted and perverted certain directions of the law, given for the guidance of the nation in their relations with other surrounding nations (such as Deut. xxiii. 6) into the maxim, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." But the language of the law itself is the same as that of the gospel. "If thou meet thine enemy's ass or ox going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under its burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him" (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5). What is this but the very law of Christ, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you"?[2] And it is the more emphatic because elsewhere,[3] when the commandment is expanded, it is "thy brother" whom it is an offence against the law not to help. "Thine enemy" is in the eye of God's law as certainly "thy brother," as "thy friend" is.

(*c*) The lawyer who asked our Lord, "Who is my neighbour?" and to whom our Lord replied by the parable of the good Samaritan, had certainly no excuse from the law for his ignorance. The provisions for the "strangers in the land" are very numerous, and though they did not enjoy the same civil rights and privileges as those who belonged to the nation, the principle on which they were to be treated was the same. The language of the law is express (Levit. xix. 34): "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born in the land, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord thy God." The "stranger" then is a "neighbour," to be loved as oneself no less than the Israelite. And there is a special touch of compassion in the reason given: "Ye shall not oppress a stranger, for *ye know the heart of a stranger*, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

(*d*) But, especially, the provisions made for the poor under these laws breathe the same spirit as the teaching of Christ and his apostles as to their peculiar claim on the people of God. Not only was it a purpose in the primary law of weekly Sabbaths, "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou,"[4] "that the son of thine handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed;" but in the secondary laws every seventh year was made a year of rest from tillage and harvest expressly for this purpose. "Six years shalt thou sow thy land, and gather in the fruits thereof. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner shalt thou do with thy vineyard and with thy oliveyard."[5] In every

[1] The English version is probably not exactly accurate; but it expresses the general sense sufficiently.
[2] Cf. Gal. vi. 2. [3] Deut. xxii. 1—4. [4] Deut. v. 14.
[5] Exod. xxiii. 10, 11; Levit. xxv. 2—7.

year, indeed, the law required that, for the benefit of the poor and the stranger, the whole field should not be reaped, and the gleanings should be left; and the same rule applied to the oliveyard and the vineyard—indeed, this law as to the yearly harvest alone could make the Sabbatical year of any value to the poor; for a carefully-harvested field could have no natural crop. This Sabbatical year also was a year of release from debts,[1] in the case of loans made to a brother Israelite in his distress. "For" (Moses says) "the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in the land." The principle in all this legislation in regard to property is, "The land is God's, and it belongs to you only as stewards under God." The rights of personal property are limited by God's rights. The poor of God's nation are both "thy poor" and also "God's poor." We in these days have learnt, indeed, that other methods of relieving the poor are more effectual than indiscriminate giving. But it was no purpose of the Divine law, any more than it was of Christ, when he said to his disciples "Sell that ye have, and give alms,"[2] to teach lessons of political and social economy; the command simply was that they should deny themselves, and trust God as regards earthly things, in order to benefit the poor. The spirit of the law (as well as that of Christ's teaching) is equally binding on us at the present day, and, because it is binding, it is also our duty to use the methods which experience has proved to be most effectual and most beneficial, and therefore the truest charity.[3] But undoubtedly of such laws as these of the Mosaic code, interpreted not in their letter but in their spirit, it is emphatically true that "whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

The Imperfection of the Secondary Laws.

57. In our rapid survey of the secondary laws of the *Torah*, we have found no difficulty in proving,—for indeed the evidence lies (we may almost say) on the surface of the record,—that the principles embodied in the religious and ceremonial laws are none other than those which are necessary to the Christian under a better covenant; and that the laws which relate to the duties between man and man are based on that truly Divine and eternal principle, one aspect of which is exact and absolute justice, and the other perfect love. These conclusions are themselves sufficient to explain the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, for they prove both the complete identity of the spirit which underlies the commandments of the law with that of his own teaching, and further that, when he contrasts that which was said to them of old time with that which he himself says to his disciples, he was contrasting, not the law of Moses with a new law that he himself gave, but the righteousness of the letter with the righteousness of the spirit, which is the essence of the law, and necessary for the kingdom of heaven. But does this mean that the law of the Pentateuch was perfect? In the sense in which the Psalmist says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," in which our Lord declares that it must be obeyed and taught, in which St. Paul describes it as holy and spiritual, and St. James speaks of it as the "perfect law of liberty," that is in its spirit and essence, undoubtedly it is perfect. And yet, in another sense, it was as certainly very imperfect. Not only as regards the shadows and figures of the ceremonial law as compared with the

[1] Deut. xv. 1—11.

[2] St. Luke xii. 33.

[3] It should be observed also, that the law discouraged that merely sentimental feeling of compassion for the poor which is often practical injustice to others. It forbad them (Exod. xxiii. 3) to "countenance (*hadar*, be partial to) a poor man in his cause." The LXX. version is οὐκ ἐλεήσεις.

reality which is Christ, what St. Paul calls "the weakness and unprofitableness" of its commandments is apparent, so that when Christ had accomplished his work, the letter disappeared before the brightness of the spirit, it disannulled itself that it might be fulfilled in the spirit; but for the same reason, that is on account of the essential imperfection of law as law, and its utter inadequacy to be *of itself* a guide for the conscience of man, the same result followed with regard to all the secondary laws without exception.

58. This truth, which is fully exemplified in the history of human law,[1] may be thus explained.[2]

"Without definite and permanent law natural life cannot make progress, and law is law indeed in proportion to its definiteness, its certainty, its rigidity. And yet these very qualities in law, without which it cannot attain its perfectness as law,—because otherwise its results must in part depend on its interpretation by a judge, as is the case with most human laws,—are also the inherent defect of law itself, giving occasion for the saying, *Summum jus summa injuria.* For it is impossible that any fixed rules should be at all times suited to all the varying circumstances and conditions of human life, in which the self-same acts may at different times be wholly different in their true character. And laws may therefore both allow some things and command others, necessary or expedient in one stage of human life, yet in another injurious or very inexpedient; so that human laws made in one age often fall into desuetude in another, and their enforcement would lead to great injustice, and they need to be from time to time reformed and adapted to the altered circumstances of men. It is therefore impossible, in the nature of things, that institutions which are the expression of positive and fixed law, although that law be given by God himself, should be perfectly adapted for man, or be permanent. And those who live under such institutions are in an imperfect state for two reasons—first, because their own judgment is not exercised in their obedience, but they obey merely because it is commanded, which is the condition of an infant or a slave; and then also because of the imperfections which are necessarily inherent in law, because it is law."

These considerations do not affect the primary law for two very obvious reasons: first, because its commandments express nothing more than the religious and moral principles which are coeval with man's origin, and the necessary results of man's original and fundamental relations to God and his fellow-man, which therefore cannot be altered by any changes in his circumstances and condition; secondly, because being a law for the conscience of man, it entirely differs from human laws by the absence from it of all fixed rules, for it leaves to the enlightened and informed conscience the office of applying its principles to the varying conditions of human life. But with the secondary laws the case is totally different. These laws contain elaborate regulations in regard to the whole sphere of human life, the very purpose of them being, as we have seen, to bring law into all its relations, and to leave as little as possible to the judgment and conscience of the individual. They were made for a nation whose moral knowledge and moral development were totally different from ours, and who had to be educated, like children, gradually to apprehend truths which cannot be learned suddenly or *per saltum,* although to us, in our state of knowledge and development, they seem self-evident. We need not be surprised therefore if we find in them not only prohibitions which are utterly unsuited to our moral condition, but also many things allowed and sanctioned, or even commanded, which *to us* would be inconsistent with morality. This subject, which, as is well known, has given rise to many attacks upon the morality of the Pentateuch, has been discussed at length in some of its aspects, in a work by the late Canon

[1] See Maine's 'Ancient Law,' chap. 11.
[2] I quote from my 'Genesis of the Church,' pp. 36—38.

Mozley.[1] In regard to some questions in the Mosaic law with which he deals, particularly those of the law of retaliation and of the Goël, he does not appear to distinguish sufficiently between the law as representing God's justice, and the law as a guide to man's conscience, or indeed to give due weight to considerations that arise from the peculiar characteristics of law. But the general principle which he maintains, namely, that all legislation, intended to raise men from a lower standard of morality to a higher, must begin on the basis of the imperfect and crude notions of right and wrong which they already possess, and, by giving these ideas a right direction and wholesome limitation, elevate them gradually into a higher sphere, is beyond all question the true solution of the difficulty, and it is a method not only consistent with the wisdom and the goodness of God, but suggesting important lessons to the Christian as to the true mode of dealing with those who are "ignorant and out of the way."

59. The real proof, however, of the law given through Moses being consistent with the character of him whose relations with man are the foundation of all religious and moral duty, is to be found in the answer to the question, whether taken as a whole, and as part of a Divine dispensation, the law fulfilled ends worthy of God, by training man to live for the purposes for which he was created. There is no question as to this in regard to the ceremonial law. In other words, there is no doubt that, notwithstanding its weakness, and imperfection, and unspirituality in itself, the law was a necessary preparation for Christ and his gospel; "our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." But is it equally true of that part of the secondary law which deals with what we understand by moral duties, that its tendency and its result was to elevate the people to whom it was given, up towards a perfect standard of morality, through the moral education which it supplied? This has been discussed by Canon Mozley in one of his Lectures (Lect. x.), and the answer is complete. Indeed, one fact is of itself sufficient proof of this, namely, that the moral standard of Christianity is nothing else than the legitimate development of those moral principles of which the Mosaical law was, from the circumstances under which it was given, an imperfect expression.

60. But it is probable that many feel a difficulty here which lies yet deeper, and which this argument will not remove. They may ask, Can the end, however good, justify the means? Can we suppose that God would have commanded or even sanctioned that which the true standard of morality condemns, in order that this true standard might be ultimately attained by others? This can only be answered by another question, viz. what is moral good and moral evil? Are they objective or subjective? or do both these elements enter into the determination of their character? And is evil only a defect of good, or a reality in itself? These questions have occupied the minds of moralists and theologians for many ages, and a brief answer cannot be a complete one. But the argument of this Introduction may at all events supply an answer sufficient for our present purpose. We have seen, in our previous investigations, that sin began with the knowledge of good and evil, without which the distinctions of good and evil in man himself did not exist; there could be no moral good and no moral evil. And in man's present condition morality, in the abstract, considered apart from all positive laws, must consist in a man's regulating his nature in accordance with the Divine order constituted in his creation in God's image, and doing unto other men, created equally in the Divine image, as he himself would be done by; the whole circumstances and condition of these other men as also belonging to the Divine order being taken into account. Moral good consists in man's recognising that order, and

[1] 'Ruling Ideas in Early Ages, and their Relation to Old Testament Faith.' 1877.

of his own will submitting to it; moral evil, in his departing from that order, whether by omission or by positive action, through the ἐπιθυμία (or desire for that which he has not) in a nature not regulated in accordance with that order. It necessarily follows from these considerations, that moral good and evil in man in its essence must be subjective; that the true moral character of an act, in the sight of him who judges the hearts of men, must be determined by the state of mind of him who commits it, his knowledge, his intentions, his motives. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."[1] The fact therefore that God gave laws suited to the state of moral knowledge in which those were to whom they were given, with the view of cultivating that knowledge, and restraining the evils which might be caused from ἐπιθυμία, does not imply that God sanctioned or even allowed man's doing that which was immoral.

61. There are two questions to which this argument specially applies, and which will sufficiently illustrate it: namely, the law of marriage, and the sanction of slavery.

(1) Our Lord's own words as to divorce apply with equal force to the whole question of the Mosaic law of marriage. "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."[2] That is, a deviation from the standard of the original institution was allowed under certain restrictions, because the absolute prohibition of the customs then prevalent in the world would, through the hardness of men's hearts, which makes them incapable of at once recognising some moral principles without previous education, prevent instead of promoting the ends for which marriage was ordained. But the law of Moses, by requiring a writing of divorce to be given, and by its other enactments, protected the law of marriage as then understood, and restrained transgressions, and thus gradually trained the mind of the people for a higher standard and for the true ideal of marriage. Indeed, we find in the prophetical writings[3] the true idea of the law of marriage asserted as if it were the law itself, being indeed the real spirit of the Divine law.

(2) The parallel case of the sanction of slavery was in all respects similar in principle. It is indeed a striking proof of the shock given to man's moral being by the Fall, that he so far lost the consciousness of God's image in every individual of the human race as to consider his brother man a mere chattel. It has been remarked[4] that "there seems to be somewhat in the institution of slavery which has at all times either shocked or perplexed mankind, however little habituated to reflection, and however slightly advanced in the cultivation of its moral instincts. The compunction which ancient communities, almost unconsciously experienced, appears to have always resulted in some imaginary principle upon which a defence, or at least a rationale, of slavery could be plausibly founded." One of these was the inferiority of certain races and their natural aptitude for the servile condition. Another, which historically was the cause of much of the slavery of the ancient world, was the supposed right of conquerors over a vanquished foe. But its more legitimate origin is to be found in the patriarchal system, and in the rights of the head of the family over all its members, among whom the servant was classed, as indicated both in the Roman term "familia," and by one of the Greek words for slave, "οἰκέτης," "one of the household."[5] However, whatever be the history of slavery, it is certain that it was universal in the ancient world, and that the conscience

[1] James iv. 17; cf. Rom. xiv. 14, 20; Tit. i. 15.
[2] St. Matt. xix. 8. [3] Cf. Ps. cxxviii.; Prov. v. 18; Mal. ii. 14, 15.
[4] Maine's 'Ancient Law,' p. 162, &c.
[5] Cf. also Heb. iii. 2—6 and Gal. iv. 1—7, where the son during his minority is supposed to be on the same level as a δοῦλος in the house.

of man was not at that period prepared for its abolition, nor would human society have benefited by such interference. The Mosaic legislation recognised it, while, as in the case of the law of marriage, it greatly ameliorated the condition of the bondsman and bondswoman, especially of those of the Hebrew nation, who could not, except by their own will, be retained in perpetual servitude. How slowly the human mind could be educated in the apprehension of the true rights of humanity is evident from the fact, that even after the revelation of the full meaning of these rights in the incarnation of the Son of God, and of the truth that all, bond or free, are one in Christ Jesus, and when Christian masters were directed to give to "their slaves that which is just and *equal*,"[1] a principle inconsistent with that power over the person which is implied by slavery; yet the principle was left to work out its true results, and slaves are cautioned not to presume on their equality, as brethren in Christ, with their master, while masters are not expressly commanded to set their slaves at liberty. The gospel recognised the fact of slavery being in the world as the law also had done; the law by its regulations modified the character of slavery and lessened its evils, until the gospel should reveal the truth, before the light of which not only the system itself but its spirit must disappear from the world.

62. In this Introduction the *Torah* has been examined only in that character of *law* which, as its name implies, distinguishes it from all the rest of Holy Scripture But it must be remembered that Moses was not only a lawgiver, but also a *prophet*, as is proved by his teaching in the Book of Deuteronomy, in which he expounds the inner spirit of the law, while he foresees and describes some of the future history of the chosen nation.[2] He was, indeed,[3] the first of that line of prophets which Jehovah promised to raise up as a perpetual witness for him to Israel, until the office in which they testified for God should have its complete fulfilment and realisation in that Divine Prophet who, raised up from the midst of Israel, of the seed of Abraham, is a Mediator between God and man in a sense that Moses could not be, and has revealed the whole will of God to man, and given his Spirit to abide with us for ever. How "the prophets," by their inspired teaching, and the authority they received from God, corrected the defects inherent in law as law,[4] awakening the consciences of men to the justice and the love of God by arguments independent of the law, and thus placing obedience to God upon a higher and surer foundation than that of mere submission to authority; and how they gradually taught the people of God that his service was in the spirit, not in the letter; freedom, and not bondage; that he would "have mercy and not sacrifice"; and thus prepared for that dispensation of the Spirit in which the veil over the face of Moses should be done away in Christ, and "the knowledge of good and evil," which to man under the dominion of *ἐπιθυμία* is death, should become, through the presence of God's Spirit in man, a higher law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which sets us free from the law of sin and death—all this is expounded in the other books of the Old Testament Scriptures. But to appreciate that part of the old economy, it is first of all necessary to have a clear and definite conception of the true character and force of the law itself; and to this end the whole of the present argument has been directed.

[1] *τὴν ἰσότητα*, Col. iv. 1; but it probably means "equity," as the *τὰ αὐτά* in Ephes. vi. 9, rather than "equality."

[2] *e. g.*, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii.

[3] Cf. Deut. xviii. 15—19. The view of this passage given above seems the only one that at all connects it with the context.

[4] 'Genesis of the Church,' p. 38.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.

BY THE

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Is the Pentateuch the work of Moses? or is it the production of a later age? If anything were needed to attest the supreme importance attaching to this inquiry, it might be found in the voluminous literature which, on this subject alone, since the middle of last century, has issued from the English, but more especially from the Continental, press. Prior to that date, the claim of Moses to be regarded as the author of the Pentateuch may be said to have been supported by the almost unanimous consent of both Hebrew and Christian antiquity. In the second century, it is true, sentiments impugning the Mosaic authorship, either in whole or in part, began to be broached, but chiefly by writers of otherwise heretical tendencies. According to the testimony of Epiphanius (Hær. xviii.) and Johannes Damascenus (de Hæresibus, ch. xix.), an obscure party among the Nazarenes regarded the present Pentateuch as spurious. Ptolemæus, a Gnostic writer belonging to the same period, in an epistle (ad Florum) preserved by Epiphanius (Hæres. xxxiii. 4), ascribed only a portion of the work to Moses. The author of the Clementine Homilies (ii. 38, 40; iii. 47) considered the account of Moses' death (Deut. xxxiv. 5) conclusive evidence that the Pentateuch did not proceed from his pen, and entertained the belief that the Pentateuch had been often lost and re-written, each time with additions. Jerome is sometimes quoted as having been suspicious of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (Perowne, Smith's 'Dict.,' art. Pentateuch), but his language, *Sive Mosen dicere volueris auctorem Pentateuchi, sive Esdram ejusdem instauratorem operis non recuso*, only bears that he detected no insuperable barrier in the way of believing that the original composition of the Hebrew law-giver may have been revised by the post-Exilian reformer. Aben Ezra likewise, though claimed as an opponent of the orthodox opinion, merely expresses doubt of the Mosaic authorship of certain passages which he regarded as subsequent interpolations (*vide* Bleek's 'Introd.,' vol. i. § 68). With the exception of that offered by the second century heretics, it is problematical if the genuineness of the Mosaic writings encountered serious opposition until towards the close of the seventeenth century, when in rapid succession it was assailed by Hobbes in his 'Leviathan' (1651), Isaak Peyrerius in his 'Systema Theologicum ex præ-Adamitorum Hypothesi' (1655), Spinoza in his 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus' (1670), Richard Simon in his 'Critical History of the Old Testament' (1678), and Clericus in his 'Sentimens' (1685), the opinions of which, however, he subsequently retracted.

Yet it was not until the publication by Astruc (1753) of what has since become known as the hypothesis of documents that the contrary belief of the post-Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch was able to make progress; but since then it has advanced with gigantic and rapid strides, more particularly in Germany, where it has enlisted in its propagation and defence a brilliant array of talent—gifted and able writers, who have expended on its demonstration and elucidation research the most minute and painstaking, ratiocination the most elaborate and careful, critical acumen the most penetrating and dexterous, eloquence the most attractive and engaging, not to speak of imagination the most wonderful and imposing. Among its advocates must be reckoned many of the most distinguished scholars of the present century. Nor can it be alleged that it is absolutely devoid of at least seemingly weighty considerations to advance in its support. That an opinion which has secured the allegiance of authorities so eminent as Tuch, Knobel, Hupfeld, De Wette, Bohlen, Bleek, Delitzsch, Ewald, Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others, should have nothing in the shape of evidence to produce in its behalf is simply incredible. Accordingly, it will be the aim of this investigation in the first place to examine the more important of those arguments which are commonly advanced in proof of the post-Mosaic or late authorship of the Pentateuch, and in the second place to review the principal of those considerations which by the advocates of the popular belief are still regarded as sufficient to establish the claim of Moses to the honour of having composed the first five books of the Old Testament Scriptures.

I. Considerations which are commonly regarded as supporting the post-Mosaic or late authorship of the Pentateuch.

1. The seeming composite structure of the narrative. While the unity of the Pentateuch regarded as a whole is too palpable to be either denied or ignored, by critics of a certain school that is usually ascribed not to the circumstance of its having issued from one mind, which one would have imagined to be the natural and obvious inference, but to the literary genius of a late writer in the time of Saul (Stähelin) or of Josiah (De Wette, Knobel, Bleek), about the end of the seventh century B. C. (Kuenen), or at all events before the destruction of Jerusalem (Ewald), or even posterior to the Exile (Hartmann, Bohlen, Wellhausen), who, having found certain ancient records that had descended from primitive times, worked them up into the present Pentateuch. The original hypothesis of Astruc related solely to Genesis, which he conjectured had been put together from two principal documents, with the assistance of ten smaller memoirs—a speculation in which he had been forestalled by Vitringa, Clericus, and Richard Simon, who all assumed written sources for the first book of Moses; but with greater boldness the theory which he adopted with regard to Genesis has since been applied to the entire Pentateuch, and the process of disintegration and dismemberment carried forward with such zeal by the rationalistic criticism of Germany, that the pre-existing documents have now become so numerous and fragmentary, that it is fairly open to consideration whether a greater miracle is not involved in the compilation of the present Pentateuch out of such *disjecta membra* than in its original composition by the hand of Moses. Amid the manifold conflicting theories which have been propounded by successive advocates of this hypothesis, one point can be detected in which all are pretty generally agreed, and indeed it is the kernel of the hypothesis, viz., that of the ancient records, or source writings, the principal were a narrative of primitive history from the pen of an unknown composer who has been styled the Elohist, from his exclusive employment, at least in the earlier portion of his work, of that name for the Deity, and a

Jehovistic document, but whether an independent writing or only of a supplementary character may be said to be as yet undetermined, touching on many of the same points as the former narration, but, unlike it, using the name Jehovah for the Deity, not altogether to the exclusion of the term Elohim, but apparently as synonymous with it.

As to the grounds on which this, in some respects fascinating, theory rests, attention is directed to the circumstance that in the earlier portion of the Pentateuch, extending from Gen. i. 1 to Exod. vi. 3, the names Elohim and Jehovah appear to have been introduced into the narrative from two distinct sources, the first name occurring in sections from which the second is distinguished by its absence, and the second finding a place in paragraphs or subdivisions, if not to the complete excision, at least to the equal companionship, of the first. Indeed so palpable is this phenomenon, that attempts have been made, though with indifferent success, to reconstruct the two documents by bringing together the different chapters and verses, clauses and words, that belong to each respectively. Of this an example will be found, so far as relates to Genesis, in the Special Introduction to that Book (*vide* pp. iii, iv). Then it is confidently alleged that the two writers can be traced throughout almost the entire course of the Pentateuch, and even up to the end of Joshua, which by most critics of this school is included in the original Elohistic writing, or, as Ewald designates it, the Great Book of Origins. When they refer to the same subjects, not only do they employ different names for the Deity, but they either give what are alleged to be quite irreconcilable accounts, as in the narratives of the Creation (cf. Gen. i. 1—ii. 3 with ii. 4—25) and the Flood (cf. Gen. vi. 9—22 with vii. 1—5), the mission of Moses (cf. Exod. iv. 31 with vi. 9) and the story of the Exodus (cf. Exod. iii. 18; v. 1, 3; vii. 16 with vi. 11; vii. 2; ix. 35; xi. 10), the redemption of the firstborn (cf. Exod. xiii. 13; xxxiv. 20 with Levit. xxvii. 27; Numb. xviii. 16) and the number of the feasts (cf. Levit. xxiii.; Numb. xxviii., xxix. with Exod. xxiii. 14—16; xxxiv. 18—23; Deut. xvi. 1—7); or they present legendary variations, as witness the stories of the abduction of Sarah (cf. Gen. xii. 10—19 with xx. 1—18) and the flight of Hagar (cf. Gen. xvi. 4—16 with xxi. 9—21), the sending of the quails (cf. Exod. xvi. 11 with Numb. xi. 31) and the murmuring for water (cf. Exod. xvii. 1—7 with Numb. xx. 1—13); or they content themselves with simple repetitions, of which the precepts relating to the three great national festivals (cf. Exod. xxiii. 17—19 with xxxiv. 23—26) and the penal statutes for violations of the marriage law (cf. Levit. xviii. with xx.) may be taken as examples. Then they have their different circles of ideas in which they respectively move, the Elohist generally giving simpler and less artificial representations of primeval times, and the Jehovist not only throwing back the Mosaic cultus into the pre-Mosaic era, but ascribing the origin of arts and handicrafts to the first generations of the human race. They are distinguished likewise by peculiarities of language and modes of expression, each having his own favourite words and phrases—the Elohist showing a predilection for the phrases הֵקִים בְּרִית or נָתַן, to give or establish a covenant; זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, male and female; פַּדַּן אֲרָם, the plain of Aram; for which the Jehovist has כָּרַת בְּרִית, to cut a covenant; אִישׁ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ, a male and his female; אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם, Aram of the two rivers; and for the words בָּרָא, to create, שִׁחֵת, to destroy, הִתְפַּלֵּל, to pray, in preference to the Jehovistic terms יָצַר, מָחָה, and עָתַר, besides employing words and phrases for which the Jehovist is alleged to have no corresponding equivalents, such as אֲחֻזָּה, possession; מִין, kind or sort; עֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, the self-same day, literally, the bone of this day; אֶרֶץ מְגוּרִים, land of sojournings; בֵּין הָעַרְבַּיִם, between the two evenings, &c.; and the Jehovist, on the other hand, being

characterised, in addition to the above idiosyncrasies, by the use of the infinitive absolute for the sake of emphasis, the poetical suffix מוֹ, the Divine name אֶלְיוֹן, and so on. And lastly, as if to establish this remarkable hypothesis beyond the possibility of challenge, the author of the Elohistic writing, by affirming that the name Jehovah was not revealed until the time of Moses (Exod. vi. 2), seems to say that he could not have written those delineations of patriarchal history in which the name Jehovah is employed.

Now it must be admitted that, if this were in all respects an accurate representation of the literary structure of the Pentateuch, the documentary hypothesis might be said to be established; but in point of fact it is a representation which in almost every particular is assailable. In the first place, it is not possible without the most arbitrary suppositions and the most inexplicable lacunæ to reconstruct even the Elohistic writing, as is partly indicated in the Special Introduction to Genesis (*vide* pp. iv, v); and even if it were, its accomplishment may be regarded as well-nigh hopeless, almost every critic having his own particular views as to what sections and clauses of the narrative have been written by the Elohist, and what by the Jehovist, and what by the third narrator, and so on. In the second place, the so-called contradictions are without exception capable of easy resolution by the application of a little cultured common sense, not to mention critical acumen; and the recurrence of similar events in times when manners were comparatively stereotyped ought not to occasion perplexity to minds of ordinary penetration; while, if repetitions in a narrative are fatal to its literary unity, many writings, amongst which it might not be impossible to detect some belonging to the higher criticism, whose authorship can be accurately determined, will be open to suspicion as being the production of several pens. In the third place, "when we examine the alleged instances more closely," *i. e.* instances of linguistic peculiarities, "we everywhere discover a difference in the conception which is demanded by the sense and context of the individual passages, or else the peculiar words ascribed to the one author are really not unknown to the other, or they occur in a few solitary places, and therefore are not entitled to be considered characteristic" (*vide* Keil, 'Introduction,' vol. i. pp. 129—136, Clark's Foreign Theological Library). And, in the last place, with reference to the supposed ignorance of the term Jehovah in patriarchal times, it is now admitted by competent authorities that this cannot be successfully maintained, since in the records relating to those times it occurs not alone in the historian's account, but in language used by the patriarchs and others of the period (*vide* Gen. xiv. 22; xv. 2; xvi. 2; xviii. 30; xx. 4; xxiv. 31, &c.), as well as by persons of the pre-patriarchal age (*vide* Gen. iv. 1; v. 29; ix. 26); since the way in which it is referred to by God himself in speaking to Moses, "my name," may be held as presupposing its previous revelation; and since the words in Exod. vi. 2 need not imply more than that now for the first time was the full significance of the name to be made known, that though the term was in use among the patriarchs, it was not understood by them as it was thenceforth to be revealed to their descendants, or even as they themselves had comprehended the other familiar appellation of the Deity, El-Shaddai. Consequently it is impossible to allow that the theory of the composite structure of the Pentateuch has been made good.

2. The alleged unhistorical character of its contents. These are of such a nature, it is averred, relate so many miraculous occurrences, include so many legendary and purely mythical compositions, perpetrate so many historical inaccuracies, and commit so many geographical and other mistakes, that it is simply incredible that they can have been the work of Moses. Without dwelling on what appears to be here tacitly acknowledged, that if Moses could be proved the author of the

Pentateuch, its authenticity would be thereby established, it may be urged that the first objection largely insisted on by Kuenen ('The Religion of Israel,' vol. i. ch. ii. p. 109) and others is *ex hypothesi* out of court, for the obvious reason that it assumes what is not admitted by the other side in this contention, and what has never been demonstrated by those who advance it, viz., that it is impossible for the Supreme Intelligence who has made the world and established the laws of nature to interfere with the order of the first, or modify the operation of the second, whenever to his infinite mind an adequate occasion for such interposition shall appear to have arisen. The second objection, which sees in the Biblical cosmogony (Gen. i.), the narrative of the Flood (Gen. vi.—ix.), the story of the Exodus, &c., &c., only Hebrew counterparts of Babylonian, Persian, Indian, and other national legends, has little difficulty in ascribing them to the same source, viz., the mythologic spirit, which among all primeval peoples has antedated the age of written documents and historical research, and by adorning and handing down through oral tradition the popular tales of the country, has everywhere given to the literatures of the nations a similar commencement. But leaving out of view meanwhile the story of the Exodus, which will fall to be afterwards considered, there are three things to be said in favour of the credibility of the Pentateuchal Cosmogony and Noachic Deluge: viz., (1) that while the resemblances between the Mosaic narratives and those of the popular legends of antiquity are so great as to show that they rest upon a common basis of fact, the dissimilarities are so apparent as to prove that they belong to widely different categories of composition; (2) that so far from the Biblical cosmogony being hopelessly unscientific, there is already established a gratifying amount of harmony between it and the best ascertained results of geological research, which warrants the belief that when modern investigation shall have announced its last finding, it will be seen to completely corroborate the sublime utterances of the old Hebrew record, while, with regard to the Deluge, it is manifest that, as Scripture does not necessitate the belief in a universal flood, *i. e.* geographically viewed, but only in a flood destructive of the totality of the human race, there is no irreconcilable conflict between science and religion such as demands either the negation of the incontrovertible facts of science, or the relegation of the Mosaic story to the limbo of popular fable; and (3) that the Chaldean monuments, one of the most valuable of recent archæological discoveries, have, by their marvellous correspondence with the Biblical narratives of the Creation and the Flood, not only completely disposed of the allegation that these narratives were entirely mythical, but likewise triumphantly vindicated their claim to be the composition of Moses by showing that they may have existed in a written form as early as the time of Abraham, and were probably among the ancient records which Moses consulted in the preparation of his great work. Then the third objection, which charges the Pentateuchal writing with historical inaccuracies, is supposed to have received, or rather, for the argument is now exactly reversed, was supposed to receive, a striking exemplification in the blunders which its unknown author had committed with reference to Egypt. The time was when Bohlen (*vide* 'Introduction to the Book of Genesis,' vol. i. ch. vi. p. 63) was believed to have annihilated the last shred of historic truth which had previously been lingering about the Egyptology of the Pentateuch. "The blunders and inaccuracies" with reference to this country of which it had been guilty were of such a character, that not only was historic criticism obliged to assign a later date than that of Moses to its origin, "but also to infer that its author was an absolute stranger to Egypt, and must have been indebted for his information to hearsay instead of observation." This literary person, who must have lived somewhere between the reign of Solomon and the time of the

Captivity, and who had never visited the land of the Pharaohs, but who was yet so well acquainted with the country, its manners and customs, its laws and religion, that in at least twenty-five different instances mentioned by Bohlen his information was correct, had committed the unpardonable error of making the Egyptians in the time of Moses build with brick, like the Babylonians, instead of stone; use "asses and camels" in the days of Abraham, like the Arabians; "bring the produce of Arabia in Ishmaelite caravans from Palestine to Egypt" in the era of Jacob; and in the time of Joseph cultivate the vine, "which was not adopted in Egypt till the reign of Psammetichus;" and had proved himself "so grossly ignorant of the climate of the country, that he transferred to it without a scruple the parching east wind of Palestine, and subsequently employed its agency to bring about the ebbing of the sea;" of the social and religious habits of the community, that he represented Joseph "as slaying animals to supply his entertainments—in glaring opposition to the sacred character they are known to have enjoyed;" and of the language of the people, "that many Aramean words were cited at random as Egyptian." So far, however, have these formidable charges been from being substantiated on closer investigation, that in every single instance they have received a triumphant refutation, proving that not the sacred writer, but the confident critic, is in the wrong. As it were, a dead and buried Egypt of which neither Psammetichus nor Herodotus was aware has risen up to deliver witness on this momentous theme. Uncovering her sepulchres and laying bare her sculptures, the Egypt of the times of Abraham and Joseph and Moses has added her testimony to what was already known of the Egypt of a later date in attestation of the authenticity of Pentateuchal history. In the department of Exposition in the various books, the light reflected upon the Mosaic writings by the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics and the study of the monumental representations has been carefully collected, with the general result "that in the entire Mosaic description of ancient Egypt there is not a single feature which is out of harmony with what we know of the Egypt of this remote period from other sources," nay, more, that "almost every point in it is confirmed either by the classical writers, by the monuments, or by both" (*vide* Rawlinson's 'Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament,' pp. 39—52). And now the fourth objection to the historic credibility, and therefore by implication to the Mosaic authorship, of the Pentateuch is the geographical and other mistakes which have been allowed to slip into the narrative, but which, if that narrative had been composed by a contemporaneous author, would as certainly have been excluded. In the catalogue of blunders, which has been drawn up in support of the thesis that they never could have been committed by Moses, there are chronological and arithmetical as well as geographical inaccuracies—inaccuracies relating to the very times, circumstances, and events in which Moses lived, as well as belonging to a long antecedent period; and inasmuch as those mistakes will bear the heaviest against the Mosaic authorship which occur in connection with the age or epoch of the reputed author, the illustrations to be now given will be taken from the history of the Exodus, in which Moses himself was a prominent actor. Bleek quotes as a chronological inaccuracy Numb. i. 1 and ix. 1, but this assumes what will be difficult to establish—that in all minute details the Pentateuch was intended to adhere to strict chronological arrangement. A more hopeful instance (Vater, Hartmann) refers to the age of the Levites in entering on service, which in Numb. iv. 3 is mentioned as thirty, and in Numb. viii. 24 is fixed at twenty-five; but even this may be disposed of by remembering that the latter passage speaks of the age for entering on the duties of the tabernacle generally, which was to be from twenty-five to fifty, while the former refers to the transportation of the ark and

tabernacle, for which work, as requiring the strength of a full-grown man, all males between the ages of thirty and fifty were to be enrolled (Hengstenberg, Keil). Among arithmetical blunders, the exact agreement of the census of the male heads of the people taken in the second year of the Exodus (Numb. i. 45) with that executed half a year earlier (Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26), for the purpose of imposing a poll tax, viz., 603,550, has long been regarded as inexplicable on any ground of historical truthfulness (Colenso); but a sufficient explanation is that the second census was not really a fresh enumeration of the people, which was not necessary, but simply a registration, according to thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, of those who had been previously entered on the public records (Keil). Geographical mistakes have been detected somewhat plentifully in the story of the Exodus, and in particular in the list of camping stations preserved in Numb. xxxiii. (Bohlen, 'Introd.,' vol. i. ch. viii. p. 88, London, 1855); but it is the less needful to offer refutation of what are mostly imaginary faults, that critics generally have felt themselves constrained to recognise the chapter in which they occur as one of the indubitable fragments of Mosaic composition contained in the Pentateuch (Hävernick, 'Introd.,' p. 335). Thus, so far as this second ground or reason for accepting the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is concerned, it is far from being as conclusive as its advocates suppose.

3. The admitted resemblance of its language to that of the later books. This objection applies with special force to the Book of Deuteronomy, between which and the other parts of the Pentateuch the dissimilarity is so palpable as to demand a diversity of authorship, while its correspondence in both thought and expression to the prophetic writings of Jeremiah is so great as to indicate, if not that it proceeded from that prophet's pen, at least that it had its origin in his time. Without attempting to discuss every minute point of criticism connected with the fifth book of Moses, which will doubtless be done in the special introduction to that portion of the Pentateuch, the two allegations that have just been referred to appear to call for notice on the ground that they bear more immediately on the larger question of the literary unity and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. As to the first, the non-resemblance of the fifth book to the preceding four, it is alleged that not only are its contents different from theirs, promulgating as it does a legislation containing many important variations from, contradictions of, and even additions to, that contained in the preceding books, as, *e. g.*, the law of the kingdom (Deut. xvii. 14), the law of the one high place (Deut. xii. 5), the law about the prophetic office (Deut. xviii. 15), &c., of all which the earlier legislation was completely ignorant, but its style of composition is characterised by a copiousness of diction altogether foreign to the other books of the Pentateuch, and by many forms of expression which are peculiarly its own. The so-called new legislation to be found in Deuteronomy we dismiss with the remark that only the exigencies of a pre-conceived theory can discover in it anything at variance with the earlier Sinaitic legislation recorded in Exodus. At present we confine our remarks to the charge of diversity of language supposed to be discernible between it and the preceding books. Colenso mentions forty-five expressions which he avers are of frequent occurrence in Deuteronomy, but are never found so much as once in the Pentateuch; but a careful examination of the examples quoted shows how much of accuracy this assertion really contains. The phrase, *e. g.*, "cleave to Jehovah," דָּבַק בַּיהוָֹה (ch. iv. 4; x. 20; xi. 22; xiii. 4; xxx. 20), is claimed as being exclusively Deuteronomistic; but the same verb, דָּבַק, occurs in Gen. ii. 24; xix. 19; xxxiv. 3, and with precisely the same sense of attaching oneself to a person or thing. "Work of the hands" (ch. ii. 7; xiv. 29; xvi. 15, &c.) is only a rhetorical expression

such as might naturally be adopted in a hortatory discourse (it occurs frequently in the Psalms) instead of מַעֲשֶׂיךָ (Exod. xxiii. 12), the form more suitable for didactic composition; and indeed this explanation accounts for the larger number of the peculiar phrases cited, such as "with all the heart and with all the soul" (ch. iv. 29; vi. 5; x. 12, &c.), "that they may learn to fear Jehovah" (ch. iv. 10; xiv. 23; xvii. 19; xxxi. 12, 13), "which thou knewest not" (ch. viii. 3), "which thy fathers knew not" (ch. viii. 16), "be strong and of a good courage" (ch. iii. 28), and so on. The admonition, "take good heed" (ch. ii. 4; xxiv. 8), "take heed to thyself," הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ (ch. iv. 9; vi. 12), is certainly not peculiar to the Deuteronomist, the stronger form being found in Gen. xxiv. 6; xxxi. 24, 29; Exod. x. 28; xix. 12; xxxiv. 12; nor is the frequent combination of law, or laws and statutes, or testimonies, or commandments, or judgments (ch. v. 28; vi. 1, 17, 20; vii. 11; viii. 11; xi. 1; xxvi. 17; xxx. 16), foreign to the earlier books (cf. Gen. xxvi. 5; Levit. xxvi. 15), while the injunction to "walk in the ways of Jehovah" (ch. v. 33; viii. 6; x. 12; xi. 22; xix. 9, &c.) is only an echo of Gen. xviii. 19. But even though every one of the cited instances could be made good, it would not amount to a necessary proof of diversity of authorship. It is too large a demand upon the credulity of the human mind to expect instantaneous assent to the proposition that no one can compose in two different styles (say an argumentative or didactic, and a rhetorical or hortatory), and much more that it was impossible for the great Hebrew lawgiver, "a prophet in whom we must acknowledge one of the most marvellous of minds of original power" (Ewald), to strike another key, and with a flood of impassioned eloquence, rendered all the more powerful and impressive because of his nearness to the better country, even an heavenly, ere he closed his earthly career to enforce upon the people's hearts the statutes and commandments he had been honoured, in the name of their covenant Jehovah, to prescribe for their obedience. Then, as to the second part of this objection, viz., the linguistic resemblance of Deuteronomy to the prophetical writings of Jeremiah, it is easy enough to show, as Bohlen has elaborately done, that a number of "words, favourite terms of expression, and peculiar phrases" are common to both, such as "the iron furnace," referring to the bondage in Egypt (Deut. iv. 20; Jer. xi. 4. The phrase also occurs in 1 Kings viii. 51, and in all the three places it unquestionably looks back to the "smoking furnace" of Gen. xv. 17); "to scatter among the people," or "among the heathen," in speaking of the Babylonish exile (Deut. iv. 27; Jer. ix. 16); "to circumcise the heart," or "the foreskin of the heart" (Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Jer. iv. 4; ix. 26); "to pollute the land" by means of divorce (Deut. xxiv. 4; Jer. iii. 1). Both writers pronounce "a curse" upon disobedience (Deut. xxvii. 26; Jer. xi. 3), threaten Israel, if rebellious, with becoming "a proverb and a byword" among the nations (Deut. xxviii. 37; Jer. xxiv. 9), describe their destroyers as "a nation from afar, whose tongue thou shalt not understand" (Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. v. 15), and whose "horses are swifter than eagles" (Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. iv. 13), and refer in like terms to the miseries they should endure while besieged (Deut. xxviii. 53; Jer. xix. 9), while both predict a subsequent restoration from captivity (Deut. xxx. 3; Jer. xxix. 14). Both denounce the worship of the sun and moon (Deut. xvii. 3; Jer. viii. 2), deliver warnings against false prophets (Deut. xiii. 1; xviii. 20; Jer. xiv. 13; xxiii. 16, 17), and forbid the practice of cutting the body as a sign of mourning for the dead (Deut. xiv. 1; Jer. xvi. 6; xli. 5). But while these resemblances are undeniable, and while it is scarcely likely that they can have been the result of pure chance, it is not quite "evident that father and son must have laboured in common on this compendium of the law" (Bohlen), or that Jeremiah, or Hilkiah, or some member of the Mosaic

party, must have fabricated "this book of the law" as a legislative programme (Kuenen, 'The Religion of Israel,' vol. ii. pp. 18, 19). For (1) there are not a few resemblances between the other Pentateuchal books and Jeremiah, of which the appended list, collected by Bohlen, may be studied (cf. Gen. i. 22; xxxv. 11 with Jer. iii. 16; xxiii. 3; Gen. xxii. 15, 18 with Jer. iv. 2; Gen. xxviii. 3 with Jer. l. 9; Levit. xix. 28 with Jer. xvi. 6; Numb. xxi. 28, 29 with Jer. xlviii. 45, 46); so that Jeremiah may be as aptly spoken of as the author, or the contemporary of the author, of these earlier compositions. (2) The partial resemblance in respect of language between the Books of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah is more than counterbalanced by a thorough-going diversity between the two, not alone in their contents, but also in their literary style, as has been shown by König and others (cf. Keil, 'Introd.,' vol. i. p. 146). (3) In so far as Jeremiah corresponds with Deuteronomy, it admits of easy explanation if the book of the law found by Hilkiah, the priest in the house of the Lord (2 Kings xxii. 8), was either the present Pentateuch or a portion of it, viz., the Book of Deuteronomy. Nothing can be more natural than that Jeremiah, who had only five years before been installed into the prophetic office (Jer. i. 1), no less than Josiah, Hilkiah, and others of the reformers of the period, should have been profoundly stirred by the remarkable discovery of the lost Pentateuch, and that in particular his earnest spirit should have drunk deeply into the soul-stirring words of the venerable Hebrew law-giver in his last great oration to the people. And (4) monumental evidence attests that the languages of antiquity were possessed of much greater fixity than modern tongues, as witness the Babylonian language, which was the same in the days of Khammurabi, who lived B.C. 1600, *i. e.* before Moses, as it was a thousand years later, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. i. p. 6).

4. THE SO-CALLED TRACES OF A LATER DATE. These, which may be called unconscious and unintentional indications of the age in which the author or authors lived, may be grouped under the following heads :—(1) *Passages which seem to presuppose the occupation of the land.* Of these the most remarkable are—(*a*) Gen. xii. 6 and xiii. 7, which appear to intimate that when these words were penned the conquest of the land had been completed, and the Canaanites expelled, whereas they are (or may have been) introduced into the narrative to inform the patriarch that the promised land was not any desolate moorland or unoccupied territory, which might have been comparatively easy for God to bestow, but a populated and populous region, which made the promise both on God's part hard to perform, and on Abraham's part hard to believe; and, on the other hand, to explain the reason why Lot and Abraham found it difficult to obtain pasture for their flocks. (*b*) Gen. xxxvi. 31, which is believed to be inexplicable, unless the writer lived under the monarchy; but, notwithstanding Bleek's confident assertion, there is nothing "in the highest degree unnatural" in the assumption that Moses meant by these words to contrast the promise made to Abraham and Jacob (ch. xvii. 6, 16; xxxv. 11), that kings should descend from their loins, which promise was at the time referred to unfulfilled, with the political greatness to which Esau, the disinherited son of Jacob, but distinguished ancestor of Edom, had so early attained. (*c*) Gen. xl. 15, from which the inference appears inevitable that at the time of Joseph's sale the land of Canaan was possessed by the Hebrews, which indeed is correct to this extent, and more is not required by the narrative (*vide* Exposition *in loco*), that the southern part of Palestine, *i. e.* the district round Hebron, was even then recognised as the land where the *Ibrim* lived. (*d*) Exod. xvi. 35, which implies, according to this hypothesis, that the Israelites had reached the land of their habitation, and were settled within its borders, before this

was written; but in point of fact Moses only states that they ate manna until they arrived upon the borders of Canaan, without saying when the manna ceased—in other words, Moses writes nothing here which was not quite within his own personal knowledge and observation. (*e*) Numb. xv. 32—36, which presupposes that the children of Israel were by this time no longer in the wilderness, *i. e.* were established in Canaan; but from the introductory words, "And the children of Israel were in the wilderness," all that can be gathered is that the historian, who consciously wrote for after times, wished it to be understood that the occurrence happened while the people were wandering in the desert. (*f*) Deut. ii. 12, which "also pretty plainly presupposes a time when the Israelites were settled in the possession of the land" (Bleek); but "the land of his possession" in this case was the land to the east of the Jordan (Gilead and Bashan), which was conquered by the Israelites under Moses, and divided among the two tribes and a half, and which is also described in ch. iii. 20 as "the possession" which Jehovah had given to these tribes (Keil). (2) *Passages which appear to imply the Palestinian standpoint of the author;* as, *e. g.*, (*a*) Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 14; xxviii. 14; Exod. x. 19; xxvi. 22; Numb. ii. 18; iii. 23; Deut. i. 7; iii. 27, &c., in which the term "sea" is used for the west, a form of expression which "it is evident neither Moses nor one of his age could have invented either while wandering in the wilderness or even when, in the last year, according to the story, they had reached the borders of the promised land, *and the Mediterranean lay then actually to the west of their position*" (Colenso); but how, with the Mediterranean on the west, it should be impossible to speak of "a wind of the sea" for a west wind, or to use the phrase "towards the sea" for in a westward direction, passes comprehension. The expressions might even be employed by a writer in the Arabian desert, or in Northern Egypt, the more especially as the term *west* includes all points of the compass between west and north-west (cf. Keil, 'Introd.,' vol. i. p. 189). (*β*) Gen. l. 10, 11; Numb. xxii. 1; xxxii. 19; Deut. i. 1, &c., in which the phrase בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן, or the similar expression מֵעֵבֶר לַיַּרְדֵּן, represents the writer's standpoint as being on the west of the Jordan, with reference to which the Moabitish plains were the parts beyond Jordan, or "the other side Jordan." But (1) it is certain that the term עֵבֶר may mean either that side or this: *vide* Numb. xxxii. 19, in which it must of necessity signify first the other side, from the speaker's standpoint (*i. e.* the west of Jordan), and second this side (*i. e.* the east of Jordan), on which the speaker at the time was; and Deut. iii. 8, in which it as clearly denotes the east of Jordan, which to the speaker Moses was "this side." Or (2) it is probable that Moses, who was consciously writing for posterity, may have occasionally assumed an ideal position, in which he proleptically represented matters as they would appear to the sons of Israel after they had entered Canaan (cf. 'Hengstenberg on the Genuineness of the Pentateuch,' vol. ii. p. 256; Keil's 'Introd.,' vol. i. p. 189). (3) *Passages which explain archaic usages and terms by those of a later origin.* (*a*) Names of places: Gen. xiv. 2, 8—"Bela, which is Zoar;" ch. xiv. 7—"En-mishpat, which is Kadesh;" ch. xiv. 17—"the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale;" ch. xxiii. 2—"Kirjath-arba, the same is Hebron;" ch. xxxv. 19—"Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." "But all these names in later use had either originated long before Moses, or did so in his time" (Keil, 'Introd.,' vol. i. p. 188; cf. 'Commentary on Genesis' *in locis*). (*β*) Names of measures: Exod. xvi. 36, "Now an omer is a tenth part of an ephah," which proves, it is argued, that the measure here called an omer (it occurs nowhere else in Scripture) had long fallen into disuse, and required to be explained; but (1) it is doubtful, as Michaelis ('Suppl.,' p. 1929) and Hengstenberg ('On the

Genuineness of the Pentateuch,' vol. i. p. 172) have shown, whether it really was a measure, and, (2) on the assumption that it was, it still requires proof that it was an old and not a new one, the words *omer* and *ephah* both being Egyptian ('Speaker's Commentary'). (4) *Passages which make citations from documents of recognised antiquity.* In Numb. xxi. 13—15, *e. g.*, the Book of the Wars of Jehovah is introduced in such a way as to convey the impression that in the days of the author of this portion of the Pentateuch it was a writing that had descended from ancient times; and yet "it certainly could not have been composed before the last period of the journeyings of the Israelites through the wilderness, and probably it was written at a still later time," so that "at all events this citation points to an author considerably later who wrote the history of the Israelites during the Mosaic time from either written or oral tradition" (Bleek, 'Introd.,' vol. i. § 82). But it is at the best an assumption that this Book of the Wars of Jehovah was composed many centuries previous to the other parts of the Pentateuch. Even Bleek admits (*vide supra*) that it might have been written during the last year of the wanderings; and no valid reason can be adduced why it might not have been a collection of odes made by Moses himself before beginning with the story of the wanderings. "That such a book should arise in the last days of Moses . . . is so far from being a surprising fact, that we can scarcely imagine a more suitable time for its commencement" (Baumgarten); and if this was the case, "the allusion to this collection of odes cannot be adduced as an argument against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch" (Keil; cf. 'Hengstenberg on the Genuineness of the Pentateuch,' vol. i. p. 182). (5) *Passages which contain the formula,* "unto this day." These occur principally in Genesis (ch. xix. 37, 38; xxvi. 33; xxxii. 33; xxxv. 20; xlvii. 26) and Deuteronomy (ch. ii. 22; iii. 14; x. 8; xi. 4; xxix. 4; xxxiv. 6); but in Genesis the formula is used of events removed by centuries from the time of Moses, while in Deuteronomy a detailed examination of the passages discovers that only one is attended with any measure of difficulty. In what appears to be the last year of the desert march, Jair the son of Manasseh is represented as calling the cities of Bashan after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day (Deut. iii. 14). The similarity of the account preserved in Judges (ch. x. 3, 4) concerning Jair, a Gileadite judge, who had thirty sons who had thirty cities called "Havoth-jair unto this day," has led to the suggestion that the words "unto this day" in Deuteronomy may be an interpolation; but this is not really necessary, as Hengstenberg has shown that a considerable period may have intervened between the naming of the towns and the writing of the record, and that frequently, as employed in the Mosaic compositions, the phrase partakes of the nature of a proverbial expression which is designed to represent an event or transaction as of a permanent rather than of a transitory character and duration.

It appears then from this somewhat lengthened survey of the arguments commonly adduced in support of the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, that there is really not one of them that can be fairly said to have fully established itself beyond the reach of cavil, but that, on the contrary, all of them are capable of vigorous disputation, and most of them of thorough-going refutation, so that, to say the least of it, it is premature to claim it as "one of the best ascertained results of modern criticism" that the Pentateuch is not the production either of Moses or of the Mosaic age, while a candid and ingenuous inquirer, sincerely desirous of arriving at the truth on this keenly agitated question, may warrantably deliver as his verdict concerning the non-Mosaic authorship, so far at least as he has yet been conducted by this investigation, *Non probatum est.* And this being so, the way seems cleared for advancing to the second branch of this inquiry.

II. Considerations which are generally believed to favour the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

1. It was not impossible for Moses to produce such a book as the present Pentateuch. In the first place, he had the means of doing so, inasmuch as it is capable of almost perfect demonstration that he was acquainted with the art of writing. So long of course as the assertion was allowed to pass current as an ascertained fact that "the earliest date which can be assigned to Semitic writing scarcely reaches to the tenth century B.C., and even this is not sufficiently accredited" (Bohlen, 'Introd.,' vol. i. p. 35), a fatal barrier existed to the claims of Moses to be regarded as the author of the present Pentateuch. But that assertion has been long since abandoned by the most eminent palæographists. Gesenius ('Heb. Gram.,' p. 8) admits that "the point of time at which we are to date the commencement of Hebrew literature in general is certainly as early as that of Moses, even if the Pentateuch, in its present shape and compass, be considered a work remodelled at a later period." Ewald ('History of Israel,' vol. i. p. 49), while doubting if written documents existed in patriarchal times, acknowledges "the two tables of the law" to be "an incontrovertible proof that there was writing in the age of Moses." Bleek ('Introd.,' vol. i. p. 82) states that "the pre-Mosaic use, among the Hebrews, of the art of writing is now generally acknowledged," and considers that "written records in the primitive times are proved by such passages as Gen. xiv.; Numb. xiii. 22; Exod. v. 6; Josh. xv. 15." Prof. Smith ('Encyclopedia Britannica,' art. Hebrew Language and Literature, ninth edition) writes that "the Semitic peoples possessed the art of writing and an alphabetical character from a date so remote as to be lost in the mists of antiquity." Indeed the monumental records of antiquity have completely disposed of the allegation that the art of writing was a comparatively recent invention. The cuneiform inscriptions from Chaldea reach as far back at least as the days of Abraham. "Bricks and stone tablets, with inscriptions of the early Babylonian monarchs, have been found at most of the sites," and the inscription of Khammurabi (now in the Museum at Paris), written in the Babylonian language, according to George Smith cannot be placed later than the sixteenth century B.C. (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. i. p. 6, and vol. iii. p. 5). In Egypt hieroglyphics are found as early as the second Egyptian dynasty ('Records of the Past,' vol. ii. p. vi); and recent excavations at Carchemish, Hamath, Aleppo, and Lycaonia show that the Hittites, a branch of which were settled in Canaan during the patriarchal period, were a literary people (possessing a peculiar system of hieroglyphic writing, which has not yet been deciphered); of which perhaps there was a hint in Kirjath-sepher, or "Book Town," the early name of their capital, Debir, the city of the oracle near Hebron (Josh. xv. 15). Then, in the second place, it is obvious that the materials could not be wanting in Moses' time for the composition of such a work as the Pentateuch. If, as is apparent, the art of writing was both known and practised in patriarchal times, it should not be difficult to credit the existence of ancient records in the patriarchal families. If the Chaldean monuments show that at a date as early as that of Abraham legendary accounts of the Creation, the Deluge, the building of the tower of Babel, closely resembling the narrations in Genesis, were preserved in Babylonia, the inference is irresistible that the true account of the primitive history of mankind might in the same manner, *i.e.* by written tablets, have been handed down at least from the days of Abraham, if not indeed from a much earlier period (*vide supra*), till they came into the hands of Moses in Egypt. Then, as Moses was himself the prominent figure in all that related to the Exodus, "*quorum magna pars fui*," the requisite material for constructing a history of that great national

emancipation and resuscitation could not be far to seek. Still further, in the third place, Moses enjoyed the leisure which was indispensable for the composition of such a work as the Pentateuch. The forty years' retirement to the land of Midian, carrying with him probably the ancient records of his people, must have afforded him, if he desired it, ample opportunity for the commencement of his literary enterprise by the composition of Genesis; while the forty years of wandering in the same Arabian desert with which his career closed would enable him to carry forward at stated intervals the work he had begun, leaving, perhaps, the account of his last hours and death (Deut. xxxiv.) to be added by the hand of Joshua. And lastly, in the fourth place, Moses could not want a motive for undertaking even so arduous a task as the composition of the Pentateuch supposes. Bleek ('Introd.,' vol. i. § 92) deems it highly improbable that Moses should have left behind him an historical work of such extent and purport. While admitting that he might have bequeathed to his countrymen "a complete series of legal precepts, full of minute details, since he wished them to be minutely observed by his people," the German critic cannot understand why he should have wished to compose an elaborate history of events with which his people were as well acquainted, and were as little likely to forget, as himself. But not even Bleek, we imagine, supposes this to be conclusive reasoning. What might have been a pertinent observation, had Moses written solely for the information of his contemporaries, is totally deprived of force when it is remembered that he wrote for posterity. Besides, since it is acknowledged that Moses gave his people written laws, and conferred on them a nationality, "is it not highly probable that he should have tried to call out their national spirit by giving them a history of their ancestry, and of their own assertion of their national independence?" ('Speaker's Commentary,' Introduction to the Pentateuch, p. 4). Altogether different from Bleek, we regard it as extremely likely that a wise and patriotic leader such as Moses should have wished, if it was in his power, to compose such a book as the Pentateuch.

2. An examination of the Pentateuch discovers at least a presumption that it was composed by Moses. In the first place, it is certain that Moses was commanded to prepare a book or historical writing of some sort (*vide* Exod. xvii. 14). Now, whether we read בַּסֵּפֶר, in the book, *i. e.* which thou hast, or which thou shalt prepare, or בְּסֵפֶר, in a book, it is clearly implied that Moses was expected to prepare a writing in which the account of Amalek's opposition to Israel and of Jehovah's determination concerning Amalek should be recorded for the benefit of after generations, and it is scarcely likely that this would be the only communication which such a writing would contain. In the second place, it is admitted that Moses did prepare a book or writing while in the wilderness. Even Professor Smith, though regarding it as doubtful whether anything has proceeded from the pen of Moses except the commandments on the tables of stone ('Ency. Brit.,' art. Hebrew Language and Literature), is constrained to recognise that these did; but the majority of critics are considerably more liberal towards the Hebrew law-giver in this respect, Bleek, for instance, ascribing to Mosaic authorship the laws in Leviticus and the songs in the Pentateuch, with perhaps the list of camping stations in Numbers. The Pentateuch itself, however, distinctly assigns to Moses the authorship of certain well-defined portions: as, *e. g.*, the Book of the Covenant mentioned in Exod. xxiv. 3—7, the contents of which were Exod. xx. 2—14; xxi.—xxiii.; the list of camping stations already referred to in Numb. xxxiii. 2—49; and the Deuteronomic law contained in the book of that name (Deut. xxxi. 9—11). Now even should we reject the contention of Hävernick, that the Book of the Covenant and the book containing the list of stations were not separate

documents, but the existing Pentateuch as far as it could be composed (*vide* 'Introduction,' § 4), and hold with Bleek that it cannot be certainly established that either the book which Moses was instructed to compose, or the law which Moses finished or made an end of writing, and committed to the Levites to be deposited in the side of the ark of the covenant, was "the connected historical work" of the Pentateuch "as we have it" ('Introduction,' vol. i. § 128); that is to say, if from each of the passages taken separately it might be perilous to infer the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, it is yet observable that the cumulative weight of all four distinctly points towards this conclusion. When it is considered that almost on entering the wilderness the Hebrew Lawgiver received a Divine order to write in the (or a) book, that on reaching Sinai he is discovered again writing in a Book of the Covenant, that as the wanderings are drawing to a termination he is again stated to have prepared a written record of the halting-places on the desert march, and that just before he dies he is once more exhibited as writing "this book of the law," the deduction seems obvious and natural that here at least is a *primâ facie* case in favour of the book in question being the present Pentateuch. In the third place, this presumption is strengthened when on examination it is further discovered that the contents of the present Pentateuch are of such a nature as to call for an author possessed of most, if not all, of the qualifications that are seen to meet in Moses. The singular accuracy of the Egyptology of the Pentateuch, which is constantly receiving confirmation from every fresh decipherment of the monumental remains of that ancient land, has already been commented on. The minute acquaintance which it displays with the social and religious customs of the people, and with the officials and etiquette of the Egyptian Court, is so remarkable that only an Egyptian could have written it. Sir Gardiner Wilkinson testifies ('Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. ch. iv. p. 328, ed. 1878) that, like the Chinese, the ancient inhabitants of the Nile valley were proverbially jealous of foreigners, whom they prevented, if possible, from penetrating into the interior of the country, and to whom they imparted as little information as possible concerning the institutions of their country. Herodotus, it is true, contrived to collect a large amount of information concerning Egypt; but no one can compare the pages of Herodotus with those of Moses without discovering that the Egyptology of the Greek historian is that of a foreigner, as distinguished from that of a native, which is the Egyptology of the Hebrew lawgiver. And a similar remark will hold good concerning the desert life depicted in the Books of Exodus and Numbers, which Bohlen, Colenso, and others have attempted to discredit, but which travellers have frequently and fully authenticated as, even in circumstantial detail, so accurate that it could only have proceeded from a writer who had an intimate acquaintance with the Sinaitic peninsula. "It is not merely that the length of each division of the journey, the numerous halting-places, are distinctly marked,—for although such notices could not possibly have been invented, or procured at any later period by a dweller in Palestine, the fact might be accounted for by the supposition gratuitously made, but hard to be rebutted, that some ancient records of the journey had been preserved by written or oral tradition,—but the chapters which belong either to the early sojourn of Moses, or to the wanderings of the Israelites, are pervaded by a peculiar tone, a local colouring, an atmosphere so to speak of the desert, which has made itself felt by all those who have explored the country, to whatever school of religious thought they may have belonged" ('Speaker's Commentary,' Introduction to the Book of Exodus, p. 244). Hence, if in Moses are found, as confessedly they can nowhere else be discovered, such intimate acquaintance with the Arabian desert and such familiarity with Egypt as are manifestly required for the production of the Pentateuch, the rational conclusion seems to be that he, and he

alone, is its author; and the more so as, in the fourth place, there are certain watermarks, as it were, in the book itself which not only vouch for its antiquity, but appear to require it to have been composed about the time of Moses. It is doubtful if the existence of archaisms in the language of the Pentateuch is a certain index of the antiquity of the writing, since these might partake of the nature of survivals from early times; but it is not a little remarkable that a larger number of these archaic forms of expression are to be found in the Pentateuch than in compositions of a later date than Moses. Then perhaps the explanatory clauses in Gen. xxiii. 2; xxxv. 6, &c., &c., should not be pressed as indications of the non-Palestinian standpoint of the author, since exception has already been taken to Gen. xii. 6 and similar passages as establishing the author's Palestinian standpoint; but the one set of clauses may be fairly regarded as neutralising the other. A surer mark of high antiquity is found in the blessing of Jacob upon Levi (Gen. xlix. 5, 6) as compared with the Mosaic benediction of the tribe (Deut. xxxiii. 8). It is apparent that between these two prophetic utterances Levi's elevation to the priesthood has taken place. Is it likely that a late author, writing, say in the eighth or seventh century B. C., would have been careful to say nothing in the earlier benediction about Levi's promotion, and nothing in the second about Levi's sin? But if Moses wrote both, the difficulty disappears.

3. THE EXISTENCE OF THE PRESENT PENTATEUCH CAN BE TRACED BACKWARDS WITH CONSIDERABLE CLEARNESS FROM THE DAYS OF CHRIST TO THOSE OF MOSES. That the volume which we now possess was recognised in Christ's day as one book does not require demonstration. Even the interval between the birth of Christ and the return from captivity in Babylon may be overleaped at a bound, since critics of the most advanced type (Bohlen, Kuenen) are prepared to grant that at least it dates from the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. It is when we pass this limit on our backward journey that we encounter opposition in attempting to identify the Pentateuch. In Josiah's time, for instance, which was in the seventh century B. C., the Book of the Law of the Lord which Hilkiah found in the temple, and which there is *primâ facie* ground for believing was the whole Pentateuch, is affirmed by modern theorists to have been only the Book of Deuteronomy, which was first fabricated by the Mosaic party and then put (perhaps by Hilkiah himself) where Hilkiah could find it (Kuenen, 'The Religion of Israel,' vol. ii. ch. vi. pp. 18, 19). The arguments on which this conjecture is based are mainly three: the difficulty of understanding how, if ever the Pentateuch existed, it should have been lost; the impossibility of reading through the entire Pentateuch to the king in one day, as is represented to have been done; and the apparent fortuitousness (which it is believed was a designed fortuitousness) of finding the lost Pentateuch exactly at the moment when it was needed to assist the plans of the Reformers. As to the first, the deplorable idolatry that prevailed throughout the land during the preceding reigns of Manasseh and Amon, which extended over upwards of half a century, might well enough occasion the Pentateuch, or Book of the Law of Jehovah, to be neglected and in a manner lost. As to the second, it is one assumption that the whole of what was found was read in one day either to the king or to the people, and another that what was read was the Book of Deuteronomy. The writer of the account in 2 Kings xxii.—xxiii. certainly states that Shaphan "read" the book first to himself, and then before the king, and then that the king read it in the ears of the people; but the chronicler (2 Chron. xxxiv. 18) informs us more exactly that this only signifies that Shaphan and the king read in the book. As to what they read, it is styled the Book of the Law, and the Book of the Covenant; but if the former of these expressions may appear to refer more particularly to Deuteronomy, the latter just as certainly alludes to Exodus; whence the probability is that

both were in the book which Hilkiah found and Shaphan and the king read. Then, as to the discovery of the roll just at the moment when it was needed, it is not at all surprising that the wave of religious enthusiasm which had set in upon Judah with Josiah's coming to the throne should have caused the forgotten Pentateuch to be inquired after, and if so, it is less surprising still that Hilkiah should have found it. It may therefore be held as certain, in default of satisfactory evidence to the contrary, that the Pentateuch existed in the seventh century B.C. That the prophets who laboured among the Israelites in the eighth century B.C., *i. e.* Isaiah, Micah, Amos, and Hosea, appealed to the early history of the people as it is contained in the Pentateuch might be verified by numerous citations from their writings containing allusions to every one of the five books of the law; but this is not required, inasmuch as that is conceded by the advocates of the post-Mosaic origin, only that to which they appealed, it is alleged, was not a formal history like the Pentateuch, but simply a traditional history which had not yet been reduced to writing (*vide* Kuenen, 'The Religion of Israel,' vol. i. ch. ii. p. 101), which, however, is begging the question in dispute. Then, passing to the times of David, it is comparatively easy, in spite of what Bleek asserts to the contrary, to detect the existence and influence of the Mosaic Pentateuch. In that "Law of the Lord" the entire poetical literature of the Davidic age may be said to have had its roots. Accepting only those Psalms which are confessedly the work of the shepherd king, it would not be difficult to show that they not only presuppose the entire Levitical system (*vide* Ps. xx., xxvii., xl., l., li.), but also allude to the story of the Exodus and the Sinaitic legislation (cf. Ps. iv. 6 with Numb. vi. 26; Ps. xv. 5 with Exod. xxii. 25; xxiii. 8; Levit. xxv. 36; Deut. xvi. 19; Ps. xvi. 4 with Exod. xxiii. 13; Ps. xvi. 5, 6 with Deut. xxxii. 9; Ps. xvii. 8 with Deut. xxxii. 10; Ps. xxiv. 1 with Exod. xix. 5: Deut. x. 14; Ps. xxvi. 6 with Exod. xxx. 19, 20; Ps. xxx. (title) with Deut. xxx. 5; Ps. xxxix. 12 with Levit. xxv. 23; Ps. ciii. 17, 18 with Exod. xx. 6: Deut. vii. 9), and even refer to the incidents of early patriarchal history (*e. g.* Ps. i. 3 to Gen. xxxix. 3, 23; Ps. viii. 6, 7, 8 to Gen. i. 26, 28; Ps. ix. 12 to Gen. ix. 5; Ps. cx. 4 to Gen. xiv. 18). Indeed the entire Hebrew Psalter, whensoever it was compiled, is a precious fruit of the religious life of Israel under the law, and everywhere requires for its full understanding just such a national history and just such an ecclesiastical system as are presented in the Pentateuchal books. Nor when we reach the ages of Samuel and the Judges does this Book of the Law cease to arrest our attention. 1 Sam. viii. 7 and Judges viii. 23 are indeed quoted as conclusive evidence that the Deuteronomic law of the kingdom (Deut. xvii. 14) was not at that time known. The toleration of several high places at one time, as in Shiloh (1 Sam. i. 3; iv. 3), Mizpah (Judges xi. 11; xx. 1, 18; xxi. 1; 1 Sam. vii. 5), Bethel (1 Sam. x. 3), Ramah (1 Sam. vii. 17), in opposition to the Mosaic ordinance (Deut. xii. 5) commanding worship to be offered at only one high place, is advanced as implying that the people were not acquainted with any such legislation as that contained in the last book of the Pentateuch; whence the inference is meant to be deduced that the Pentateuchal books had not been at that time composed. Bleek, however, is candid enough to recognise ('Introduction,' vol. i. § 124) that the mere fact that the Mosaic laws were not observed is not sufficient proof that they did not exist, or were not known, and Keil ('Introduction,' vol. i. § 34) has satisfactorily shown that not only were Gideon's refusal of the crown of Israel and Samuel's unwillingness to elect a king in perfect harmony with the Mosaic law upon the subject of their future monarch, but that it is doubtful if even during those troublous and unsettled times between Joshua and David there ever was more than one national sanctuary, viz., at Shiloh, the other instances specified being places at which excep-

tional acts of worship were performed, and for perfectly adequate reasons, while abundant evidence exists that, notwithstanding all the turbulent disorder of the period, "the law of Moses formed the basis of the religious, civil, and political life of the nation." And thus we are conducted to the days of Joshua, in the history of which, as it lies recorded in the Book of Joshua, the references to the Pentateuch, which besides it often styles "the Book of the Law of Moses" (ch. i. 7, 8; viii. 31, 34; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 6), are so numerous that the opponents of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch have only been able to escape from its overpowering testimony by the ingenious device of first adding it to the five books of Moses, so as to form not a Pentateuch, but a Hexateuch, and then relegating it for an author to the days immediately before or after the Babylonish exile.

4. THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH IS EXPRESSLY CERTIFIED BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES. The force of this remark it has been usual to turn aside by observing that Christ and his disciples only shared in the popular belief of their age, and not only made no pretensions to instruct their countrymen in Biblical criticism, but were themselves wholly unacquainted with even the first principles of the science. But it is simply incredible that Christ should have spoken as he did (Matt. xix. 7; Mark xii. 19; Luke xvi. 31; John v. 46, 47), or allowed his apostles to speak and write as they did (John i. 45; Acts xv. 25; Rom. x. 5; Heb. xiii. 12, 13), if he knew that the Pentateuch was only a literary fiction, the production of a late age, that had been floated into public acceptance by being falsely imputed to the Hebrew lawgiver; while if he did not understand this, though in reality it was so, then it is clear he was not so wise as many learned critics of the nineteenth century, and it will come to be a question whether one who could be imposed upon by so impudent a forgery was entitled to claim the homage of mankind, saying, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness;" "I am the Truth;" "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me."

5. A VARIETY OF SUBORDINATE CONSIDERATIONS MAY HERE BE GROUPED TOGETHER WHICH TEND TO CORROBORATE, OR ARE SUPPOSED TO CORROBORATE, THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH. First, the Samaritan Pentateuch, which was known to Cyril of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, and other early Christian writers, and which, after having been lost to the Christian Church for upwards of 1000 years, was in 1616 obtained from the Samaritans in Damascus by Pietro della Valle, accords in almost every point except dates with the Jewish Pentateuch; and since the Samaritans accepted no other books of the Hebrew Scriptures except this, and since their hostility to the Jews was so great that it is almost certain they would not have accepted this unless they had regarded it as the work of Moses, and since, moreover, it is written in the ancient Hebrew character, which is older than the Samaritan square character introduced by the Jews at the time of the Captivity, or at the latest by Ezra, it has been argued that it must have been in existence prior to the division of the kingdom, *i. e.* as early as the time of Solomon. But these arguments do not now appear to the defenders of the genuineness of the Pentateuch to be possessed of the weight they were once believed to have, and Hengstenberg accordingly ('On the Genuineness of the Pentateuch,' vol. i. p. 106) has given them up. The uncertainty, therefore, of the date when this copy of the Pentateuch was adopted by the Samaritans, whether about 409 B. C., when the Jewish priest Manasseh betook himself to the Samaritans (Neh. xiii. 28), or in the time of Josiah, whose reformation extended beyond Judah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 9), or earlier yet, in the days of Hoshea, when the king of Assyria sent an Israelitish priest to instruct the colonists whom he had settled in Samaria (2 Kings xvii. 28), renders it comparatively useless as an argument either on one side

or the other. Secondly, of much greater value is the sufficiently accredited statement that all the Jewish sects and parties—Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, Palestinian and Alexandrian Jews—have been unanimous in accepting the Hebrew Pentateuch as the work of Moses, while the chief opposition to its genuineness has arisen within the bosom of the Christian Church. Then, thirdly, the difficulty of explaining the uprise, development, and consummation of Mosaism as a religious system without the initial impulse that is implied in the Mosaic composition of the Pentateuch must not be overlooked. The modern theory of evolution as applied to religion will not account for ancient Judaism any more than for modern Christianity. As the New Testament Church is inconceivable without the incarnation and the apostolic Gospels, so neither was the Old Testament Church possible without a Sinaitic revelation and a Mosaic Pentateuch. And lastly, the advocates of the Mosaic authorship may fairly appeal to the hopeless confusion into which the supporters of the opposite theory are thrown whenever they are asked to condescend upon the individual, or even upon the age, to which it should be assigned—one thinking it should be given to the period immediately after the Conquest, and another to the age of Solomon, a third to the times of Josiah, and a fourth to the era after the Captivity.

The conclusion then to which we are conducted is that though the Pentateuch may have been partly compiled from written sources, and subsequently revised by Ezra, there is not sufficient ground for challenging its substantial Mosaic authorship, and still less for the tone of confident assertion which is assumed by the so-called higher criticism in proclaiming its late origin; while there is good cause for such as belong to the conservative side in this important controversy adopting a somewhat less apologetic style than they have hitherto done in maintaining the ancient faith of both the Jewish and Christian Churches, that the Pentateuchal books proceeded from the pen of Moses, the man of God.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. Its Title and Contents.

1. *Its title.* Like the other four divisions of the Pentateuch, the First Book of Moses derives its title in the Hebrew Scriptures from its initial word, Bereshith; in the LXX., which is followed by the A. V., it is designated by a term which defines its contents, Γενεσις (Genesis). Γενεσις referring to the source or primal cause of either thing or person, the work to which it has been assigned as a descriptive appellation has been styled the Book of Origins or Beginnings (Ewald); but since the LXX. employ Γενεσις as the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Tôl'dôth, which signifies not the causes, but the effects, not the antecedents, but the consequents of either thing or person (*vid.* ii. 4: Exp.), the writing might be more exactly characterised as the Book of Evolutions or Developments.

2. *Its contents.* As a Book of Origins or Beginnings, it describes the creation or absolute origination of the universe, the formation or cosmical arrangement of this terrestrial sphere, the origin of man and the commencement of the human race, while it narrates the primeval histories of mankind in the three initial ages of the world—the Antediluvian, the Postdiluvian, and the Patriarchal. Subsidiary to this, it depicts the pristine innocence of man in his first or Edenic state; recites the story of his fall through the temptation of an unseen adversary, with the revelation of Divine mercy which was made to him in the promise of the woman's seed, and the consequent establishment on earth of a Church of believing sinners, looking forward to the consummation of that glorious promise; traces the onward course of the divided human family, in the deepening impiety of the wicked, and the decaying godliness of the righteous, till, ripe for destruction, the entire race, with the exception of one pious household, is wiped out or washed off from the face of the ground by the waters of a flood; then, resuming the thread of human history, after first sketching the principal features of that appalling catastrophe, pursues the fortunes of this family in its three sons, till it sees their descendants dividing off into nations, and spreading far and wide across the surface of the globe; when, returning once more to the original centre of distribution, it takes up the story of one of

these collateral branches into which the race has already separated, and carries it forward through successive stages till it connects itself with the later history of Israel. Or, regarding the work in the other mentioned aspect, as a Book of Evolutions or Developments, by which the standpoint of the writer is changed and brought round from the historical to the prophetic, from the *à posteriori* to the *à priori*, after sketching in a preliminary section the original creation of the universe and the arrangement of the present terrestrial cosmos, in ten successive sections it relates the Tôl'dôth or generations, *i. e.* the subsequent evolutions or onward developments of the cosmos which lead down to the point of departure for the history of Israel narrated in the ensuing books. The main divisions of the Book, according to the principle just stated, are indicated by the formula: "These are the generations of . . . ." The following tabular view of these successive sections will afford an idea of the wide range of topics comprehended in the First Book of Moses :—

Section 1.	The beginning	ch. i. 1—ch. ii. 3.
" 2.	The generations of the heavens and the earth	ch. ii. 4—ch. iv. 26.
" 3.	" " " Adam	ch. v. 1—ch. vi. 8.
" 4.	" " " Noah	ch. vi. 9—ch. ix. 29.
" 5.	" " " the sons of Noah ...	ch. x. 1—ch. xi. 9.
" 6.	" " " Shem	ch. xi. 10—26.
" 7.	" " " Terah	ch. xi. 27—ch. xxv. 11.
" 8.	" " " Ishmael	ch. xxv. 12—18.
" 9.	" " " Isaac	ch. xxv. 19—ch. xxxv. 29.
" 10.	" " " Esau	ch. xxxvi. 1—ch. xxxvii. 1.
" 11.	" " " Jacob	ch. xxxvii. 2—ch. l. 26.

§ 2. Its Sources and Authorship.

1. *Its sources of information.* That writings of an earlier period may have been employed in the compilation of the present narrative, however alarming the idea was when first propounded, and notwithstanding the fact that it is still frequently advanced in a hostile spirit, is now seen to be a comparatively innocuous hypothesis, at least when considered in itself. That the author of the Book of Origins should have availed himself of pre-existing materials in the composition of his great historical work seems no more an unreasonable suggestion than that the four evangelists should have drawn upon already circulating memoirs of our Lord's life and work in the construction of their respective Gospels. Nor does any sober critic or intelligent student of the Bible now believe that such a supposition is fatal to the claims either of the Pentateuch and the Gospels to be received as canonical Scriptures, or of their writers to be regarded as inspired teachers. Accordingly, the documentary hypothesis, as it is now familiarly styled, counts among its supporters not a few of those who maintain the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and therefore of Genesis, as well as the vast majority, if not all, of those by whom that authorship is assailed. The germ of the theory appears to have suggested itself so early as the seventeenth century to Hobbes, who wrote in his 'Leviathan' "that the Pentateuch

seems to have been written rather about than by Moses" ("Videtur Pentateuchus potius de Mose quam a Mose scriptus"), though doubtless it was based upon originals from his hand. About the beginning of the eighteenth century Vitringa, in his 'Observationes Sacræ,' propounded the view that Moses had employed sketches written by the patriarchs: "Schedas et scrinia Patrum (or ὑπομνήματα Patriarcharum) apud Israelitas conservata Mosen opinamur, collegisse, digessisse, ornasse, et ubi deficiebant compilasse, et ex iis priorem librorum suorum confecisse." Plausible and probable as this conjecture was, it seems to have attracted little attention to the subject of the composition of the Book of Genesis beyond causing written sources to be assumed by one or two subsequent writers, such as Clericus and Richard Simon. In 1753 the well-known theory of two principal documents, an Elohistic and a Jehovistic, was broached by Astruc, a Parisian doctor and professor of medicine, who believed ten additional but smaller memoirs to have been also employed by Moses. A few years later (1780) substantially the same view was espoused and recommended to public favour by the German scholar Eichhorn. In the hands of Ilgen (1798) and his follower Hupfeld (1853) the two original or primary documents were subdivided into three, a first Elohist, a second Elohist, and a Jehovist, all of which were manipulated and pieced together by an editor or redactor. In 1815 Vater, and in 1818 Hartmann, adopted the idea that the Pentateuch, and in particular Genesis, was composed of a number of disconnected fragments; but this was so obviously erroneous that in due time (1830) it was followed by the supplementary hypothesis of De Wette, Bleek, Stähelin, Tuch, Lengerke, Knobel, Bunsen, Delitzsch, and others, which recognised two documents, of which the older and the principal, that of the Elohist, was a continuous narrative, extending from the creation to the close of the conquest as recorded in the Book of Joshua; while the other, that of the Jehovist, was the work of a later writer, who made use of the earlier as the foundation of his composition. The latest form of the theory is that of Ewald, who claims for the Great Book of Origins at least seven different authors (thus reducing the Pentateuch, as Keil observes, into atoms), and assigns the Book of Genesis, in its present state, to an author whom he designates as "the fourth or fifth narrator of original history," who must have lived in the eighth century in the kingdom of Judah.

The supposed basis of this hypothesis of supplements is—1. The alternate use of the Divine names Elohim and Jehovah: *e. g.* Gen. i. 1—ii. 3; v. 1—29*a*, 30—32; vi. 9—22; vii. 11—viii. 16*a*, 17—19; ix. 1—17, 28, 29; x.; xi. 10—32; xii. 5, 6, 8*a*; xiii. 18; xvii.; xix. 29; xx. 1—17; xxi. 2—32; xxii. 1—13, 19—24; xxiii.; xxv. 1—20, 24—34; xxvi. 34, 35; xxvii. 46; xxviii. 1—12, 17—21*a*, 22; xxix.; xxx. 1—13, 17—24*a*; xxxi. 4—48, 50—54; xxxii. 1—12, 14, 33; xxxiii.; xxxvi.; xxxvii. 2—36; xxxix. 6—20; xl.—l., are distinguished by the employment of the first of these Divine names, and are supposed to belong to the Elohistic document; while ii. 3—iv. 26; v. 29*b*; vi. 1—8; vii. 1—10, 16*b*; viii. 20—22; ix.

18—27; xi. 1—9; xii. 1—4, 7, 8*b*, 9—20; xiii. 1—17; xiv.—xvi.; xviii. 1—xix. 28, 30—38; xx. 18; xxi. 1, 33, 34; xxii. 14—18; xxiv.; xxv. 21—23; xxvi. 1—33; xxvii. 1—45; xxviii. 13—16, 21*b*; xxx. 14—16, 24*b*—43; xxxi. 1—3, 49; xxxii. 13, 15—32 (?); xxxvii. 1 (?); xxxviii.; xxxix. 1—5, 21—23, are constituent parts of the supplementary or Jehovistic document, being characterised by the use of that particular name for the Deity. 2. Contradictory accounts of the same event: as, *e. g.*, the narratives of (1) the Creation (cf. i., ii. 4—25); (2) the Flood (cf. vi. 9—22 with vii. 1—10, and in particular note the apparent discrepancy between the numbers of the animals to be taken into the ark; (3) the boundaries of the promised land (cf. xv. 18 with Num. xxxiv. 1—12). 3. Variations in the same legend or story: as, *e. g.*, (1) the Abrahamic covenant (cf. xv. with xvii., xviii.); (2) the taking of Sarah (cf. xii. 10—19 with xx. 1 and xxvi. 1—11); (3) the story of Hagar and Ishmael (cf. xvi. 9—21 with xxi. 9—21); (4) the covenant with Abimelech (cf. xxi. 22—34 with xxvi. 26—33); (5) the successive consecrations of Bethel (cf. xxviii. 18, 19; xxxv. 14, 15); (6) the story of Esau and his birthright (cf. xxv. 27—33; xxvii. 1—40). 4. Diversity of language and ideas in the two documents—the Elohist generally depicting the simple and inartificial manners of primeval times, and the Supplementer or Jehovist moving in a circle of ideas that belong to the era of Mosaic laws and Levitical institutions. Cf. for Elohistic ideas, the longevity of the patriarchs, v.; the consecration of pillars, xxviii. 18*f*; xxxv. 14*f*; the giving or setting up of a covenant, vi. 18; ix. 9, 11, instead of the cutting of a covenant, as in Exod. xxiv. 8; and for Elohistic words and phrases—"possession, property," xvii. 8; xlviii. 4; "kind, sort," i. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25; vi. 20; vii. 14; "in the self-same day," vii. 13; xvii. 23; "the land of wanderings," xvii. 8; xxviii. 4;—for Jehovistic ideas, iv. 17—24 (the arts and handicrafts of civilisation); iii. 8—24; xviii. 1 (Theophanies); iv. 3, 4; viii. 20; xv. 9 (sacrificial worship); xii. 7; xiii. 4; xxi. 33 (the erection of altars); vii. 2, 8; viii. 20 (the distinction between clean and unclean animals); v. 29; ix. 25—27 (the prophetic element); and Jehovistic words and phrases—יָצַר ii. 7, instead of בָּרָא i. 1; אִישׁ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ vii. 2, instead of זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה i. 27; the inf. absol. for emphasis, ii. 16, 17; iii. 4, 16; xvi. 10; xxx. 16; the suffix מוֹ ix. 26, 27; the Divine name עֶלְיוֹן xiv. 18—20, 22. But, without replying to these so-called arguments *seriatim*, it may be answered, as against the entire hypothesis, that it is—1. *Unnecessary*, not being required for a perfectly satisfactory elucidation of either the use of the Divine names, or the so-called contradictions, variations, and peculiarities that have been detected by the microscopic criticism to which the Book has been subjected (*vid.* the exposition of the text in the body of the work). 2. *Unproved.* (1) As to the existence of the documents,—though admitted to be probable, the use of such writings by the author of Genesis is at the best inferential and problematical. (2) As to the supposed evidence in support of this conjecture,—it is impossible to appor-

tion the narrative into Elohistic and Jehovistic sections, so that even the former shall compose one continuous narrative, without the expenditure of a vast amount of ingenuity, and the exercise of a high degree of arbitrariness in first disintegrating the body of the Book, and then recombining the pieces, with the assistance of sundry self-invented supplements—the so-called contradictions in event and legend existing solely in the imagination of the critic, not in the work of the author, and the alleged peculiarities in thought and diction of each document having parallels in the other, except in cases which admit of easy explanation. 3. *Incomplete;* that is to say, not accounting for all the facts of the case that require to be explained, as, *e. g.*—(1) The employment of the name Jehovah Elohim in ii. 4; iii. 24. (2) The omission in the fundamental or Elohistic document of sections that are indispensable not only to the continuity of the narrative, but to the right apprehension of its meaning, as, *e. g.*, between ii. 3 and v. 1, the incident of the Fall, thus rendering vi. 9—13 an enigma; between v. 32 and vi. 9, the corruption of the human race, without which the Deluge remains inexplicable; between vi. 22 and vii. 11, the Divine communication which advertised Noah of the exact moment when the Flood should commence; between xvii. 27 and xix. 29, the story of the destruction of the cities of the plain, which alone renders the latter verse intelligible. (3) Allusions in the fundamental document to events and incidents recorded in the Supplementer, as, *e. g.*, v. 3 to iv. 25; v. 29 to iii. 17; xvii. 20 to xvi. 10; xix. 29 to xiii. 10—13; xviii. 17—32, and xix. 1—25; xxi. 9 to xvi. 5. If these difficulties are not sufficient in themselves to discredit the hypothesis of documents altogether, they are at least of weight enough to show that, while the original conjecture of Vitringa may be true, the modern critical theory of an Elohistic and a Jehovistic author of the Book of Genesis has not yet been placed beyond the region of debate.

2. *Its authorship.* Principally on the ground of certain traces of a later age (1. The formula "unto this day"—xix. 37, 38; xxvi. 33; xxxii. 32; xxxv. 20; xlvii. 26. 2. Statements that seem to presuppose the occupation of the land—xii. 6; xiii. 7; xxxvi. 31; xl. 15. 3. The Palestinian standpoint of the writer—xii. 8; l. 11. 4. The explanation of ancient names of cities by the introduction of names of a later origin—xiv. 2, 8, 7, 17; xxiii. 2; xxxv. 19. 5. The mention of usages and customs that are alleged to belong to a later period—iv. 3, 4, 14; vii. 8; viii. 20; xvii. 26; xxiv. 22, 30; xxv. 22; xxxvii. 3, 23), the claims of Moses to be regarded as the author of the Book of Genesis, and indeed of the Pentateuch generally, have since the Reformation been vigorously assailed. Prior to that profound theological and religious awakening, it is but fair to acknowledge that certain grave doubts had been expressed as to whether the great Book of the Law should be attributed, either in whole or in part, to the Hebrew lawgiver. Ptolemæus, the Valentinian, in the second century, ascribed only a portion of the work to Moses; the Nazarenes, an ascetic sect spoken of by John Damascenus ('De Heræsibus,' ch. xix.), rejected the entire composition

as spurious; while, according to the Clementine Homilies (iii. 47), the present Pentateuch was written after Moses' death. There does not appear, however, to have been any serious questioning on the subject of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole, or of Genesis as a part of that larger work, until the sixteenth century, when it began to be insinuated by Masius (1574), Spinoza (1670), and Anton Van Dale (1696), that not Moses, the Hebrew lawgiver, but Ezra, the priest-prophet of the Restoration, was the first composer of those parts of sacred Scripture. The publication of Astruc's views in 1753 gave a decided impulse to the science of historic criticism, which in course of time resulted in the widespread acceptance by Biblical scholars of the opinion that, while containing a slight substratum of Mosaic legislation, the present Pentateuch is not the work of the Hebrew lawgiver, but of an unknown writer belonging to a later period who made use of pre-existing documents, of which the principal were the Elohistic and Jehovistic memoirs already referred to. At the present moment this view extensively prevails in both England and Germany. At the same time, consistency requires it to be stated that, in the minds of those who have rejected the Mosaic authorship of the Book of Origins, the most hopeless perplexity reigns as to the person to whom that honour should be assigned. It is vain to look for anything like unanimity of sentiment among modern students of the higher historic criticism concerning the authorship and date of composition of the two principal documents or source writings (Quellenschriften), as Bleek designates them, out of which the first fifth of the Pentateuch was manufactured. In the judgment of Astruc and Eichhorn, the documents referred to were pre-Mosaic, and the Book of Genesis was the handiwork of Moses; but so safe and reasonable a solution of the authorship of Genesis has long been left behind by their scholars, the composition of the earliest or fundamental document being assigned by Stähelin to an unknown writer in the times of the Judges (Colenso suggests Samuel as the anonymous Elohist), by Bleek to a historian who flourished in the time of Saul, by Killisch to a contemporary of David, by Ewald to a brilliant Levite in the age of Solomon, by De Wette to an author in the time of the Kings, and by Bohlen to a literary artist who wrote as late as the captivity, or even later—the Jehovist or Supplementer in each case writing at a period considerably posterior. Accordingly, where such diversity of sentiment exists, the Biblical student may fairly hesitate to reject the pre-Reformation doctrine of the Mosaic authorship of Genesis, and all the more that it is still supported by such excellent names as those of Sack, Hengstenberg, Hävernick, Ranke, Dreschler, Baumgarten, Kurtz, Keil, and others, and is not so entirely destitute of evidence as is sometimes alleged. 1. Without attaching that importance to the direct testimony of the Pentateuch to its Mosaic authorship which it seems to possess in the eyes of some apologists (Exod. xvii. 14, xxiv. 3, 4, and Num. xxxiii. 2 can scarcely be pressed to mean more than that Moses composed the different writings of which they speak; while Deut. xvii. 18, 19; xxviii. 58, 61; xxix. 19, 20, 27; xxx. 10; xxxi. 9—11, 24—26 do

not appear so conclusively to assert the composition by Moses of the entire law, as understood by Jewish tradition, as to preclude the opinion that the passages in question only refer to the Mosaic legislation proper), it may be maintained that the number and character of the direct references in the subsequent Hebrew Scriptures to the Pentateuch as the work of Moses are such as to involve the truth of his claim to be regarded as its author (cf. Josh. i. 7, 8; viii. 31; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 26; 1 Kings ii. 3; viii. 9, 53; 2 Kings x. 31; xi. 12; 1 Chron. xvi. 40; 2 Chron. xii. 1; Ezra iii. 2; vi. 18; Neh. i. 7; viii. 1; Dan. ix. 11, 13 for the historical books; and *vid.* the poetical and prophetic writings *passim*). In every one of these Scriptures there is a clear recognition of the Pentateuch as having been in existence at a time prior to their composition, *i. e.* from the days of Joshua onward; in which case its only conceivable author was the celebrated lawgiver of the Hebrews. 2. It is allied to this to say that the historical development of the theocratic nation is inconceivable except upon the hypothesis of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and therefore of Genesis. To imagine that the complicated system of the Mosaic institute gradually took shape, and perpetuated itself through several centuries, working itself in, by slow degrees, to the national life and conscience, without any accredited historical documents, in such a way that when at length the history of the nation came to be written, it should by every separate writer be judged necessary to misrepresent the facts of the case, by promulgating the belief that their great national institutions were the outcome of a previously-recorded writing from the hand of Moses, rather than that that writing (so-called by Moses) was the free historic product of their institutions—to accept this as the true solution of the inter-relation between Hebrew literature and Hebrew life is to make a far greater demand upon the historic faculty than to believe that the Pentateuch came first from Moses, and the national character and life were framed and moulded by the Pentateuch. 3. Then there is the fact that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and therefore of Genesis, was universally recognised by Jewish sects and parties—by Pharisees, and Sadducees, and Essenes; by Alexandrian as well as by Palestinian Jews; and by the Samaritans as well as by the inhabitants of Judæa. 4. The testimony of Christ and his apostles lends its weight to this conclusion (cf. Matt. xix. 7; Mark xii. 19; Luke xxiv. 27, 44; John i. 45; v. 46, 47; Acts xv. 21; Rom. x. 5). Even Bleek with sufficient candour admits that this was the view entertained at the time of Christ and his apostles, as Philo and Josephus expressly testify; and the force of this admission is not rendered nugatory by the oft-quoted dicta that neither Christ nor his apostles came into the world to teach criticism (Clericus), and that faith in Christ cannot set limits to critical inquiries (De Wette); for, as Hermann Witsius justly observes, it is quite true that neither Christ nor his apostles were critical scholars (*critici doctores*) in the modern acceptation of the term; but they were certainly teachers of the truth (*doctores veritatis*) who did not come into the world to fortify popular errors by their authority. 5. An

additional argument may be derived from the internal unity of the Pentateuch, and in particular of the Book of Genesis. It is true that in one sense this is the very question in dispute, whether Genesis is the work of one or more authors; but, as its (alleged) composite character is always paraded as an argument for its non-Mosaic authorship, it seems both reasonable and fair to claim any traces of internal unity which the writing may possess as supporting the opposite conclusion. Now one obvious mark of unity which belongs to Genesis is the exact chronological thread running through it from the beginning to the end; and another is the interdependence of all its parts, of which no section of any length can be removed without introducing into the narrative an inexplicable lacuna; while a third is the similarity of language which pervades it throughout, no one, as Keil observes, having been able clearly to establish a twofold *usus loquendi* in its pages. And this being the case, it is only a legitimate inference that such internal unity is more likely to have been impressed upon it by the hand of Moses than by that of a late redactor. And, 6. in proof of the Mosaic authorship of Genesis there is the insufficiency of evidence in support of every other hypothesis.

§ 3. Its Method and Purpose.

1. *Its method.* On this point, after what already has been written (*vid.* p. i.), a few words will suffice. The most cursory reader of the Book of Genesis cannot fail to discern that, so far from its being open to the charge of incoherency and want of arrangement which has been brought against it by some of its less scrupulous assailants, it is all through constructed on a simple, perfectly intelligible, and well-sustained plan. After the initial section, in which the sublime programme of the Divine cosmogony is unfolded, it divides itself into ten successive books, in each of which the story of human history is advanced a stage, till the period of the first captivity is reached. While possessing to each other the very closest of relations as parts of the same connected composition, it is observable that these successive subdivisions have the appearance of being each in itself a complete piece or monograph on the subject to which it relates. The cause of this, however, is not that each has been a separate document prepared without relation to the others, possibly at a different time and by a different hand, as is so commonly suggested; it rather seems attributable to the peculiar genius of Hebrew composition, which, being governed less by logic than by dramatic interest, advances more by sketching tableaux of events and scenes than by presenting a detailed narration of each historical incident exactly in its proper time and place. A remembrance of this will go far to account for the appearance of repetition and prolixity which in some parts the narrative exhibits. Then it is deserving of attention that, while treating of the fortunes of the human race, the record, almost instantly on starting, confines its regards, in the earlier portion, to one particular section (the line of Seth), and, in the later, to one particular family (the children of Abraham, in

the line of Isaac and Jacob), and deals with the other branches of the human family only in so far as they are needful to elucidate the story of the chosen seed. And still further it is noticeable that, in the elaboration of his plan, the author is always careful to keep the reader's eye fixed upon the special line whose fortunes he has set himself to trace, by dismissing at the outset of each section with a brief notice those collateral branches, that nothing may afterwards arise to divide the interest with the holy seed, and the narrative may flow on uninterruptedly in the recital of their story. "The materials of the history," writes Keil, "are arranged and distributed according to the law of Divine selection; the families which branched off from the main line are noticed first of all; and when they have been removed from the general scope of the history, the course of the main line is more elaborately described, and the history itself is carried forward. According to this plan, which is strictly adhered to, the history of Cain and his family precedes that of Seth and his posterity; the genealogies of Japhet and Ham stand before that of Shem; the histories of Ishmael and Esau before those of Isaac and Jacob; and the death of Terah before the call and migration of Abraham to Canaan;" and "in this regularity of composition," he further adds, "the Book of Genesis may be clearly seen to be the careful production of one single author, who looked at the historical development of the human race in the light of Divine revelation, and thus exhibited it as a complete and well-arranged introduction to the history of the Old Testament kingdom of God.";

2. *Its purpose.* Consideration of the plan naturally leads to an examination of the purpose of the Book. And here it is at once obvious that Genesis was not designed to be a universal history of mankind. But just as little was it written (by a post-Mosaic author) with the special view of glorifying Judaism by tracing back the roots of its institutions to a hoary antiquity. It had indeed an aim which may be said to have been Jewish, but it had also a design which was cosmopolitan. As an integral part of the Pentateuch, it was intended to unfold the necessity and nature of the new economy which was about to be established; to show how the theocratic institutions of salvation had been rendered indispensable in consequence of the fall and the entire corruption of the race so signally punished by the Deluge, and again so strikingly displayed by the tower-builders of Babel; and to make it clear that they were not a new departure on the part of God in his efforts at redemption, but only a further development of the line he had pursued from the beginning. As the opening volume of revelation in which the history of salvation was to be recorded, it was designed to exhibit the primeval condition of the human race, with its melancholy lapse into sin which first of all rendered salvation necessary, and to disclose the initial movements of that Divine grace which ever since had been working for man's restoration, and of which the theocracy in Israel was only a specific manifestation. Thus while the Book of Genesis could not fail to be possessed of undying interest to every member of the Hebrew Church and

nation, it is likewise a writing of transcendent value and paramount importance to every scion of the human race, containing as it does the only authentic information which has ever yet reached the world of the original dignity of mankind, and of the conditions under which it commenced its career on earth; the only satisfactory explanation which has ever yet been given of the estate of sin and misery in which, alas, it all too plainly finds itself to-day, and the only sufficient gospel of salvation that has ever yet been recommended to its attention and acceptance.

Literature of Genesis.

Of the exceptionally rich and varied literature on Genesis, the principal works may be classified as under:—

I. Introductions. 1. *Foreign.* Bleek: Introduction to the Old Testament, Berlin, 1865; London, 1875. Bohlen: Introduction to Genesis, Königsberg, 1835; London, 1855. De Wette: Introduction to the Old Testament, Berlin, 1817; Boston, 1844. Ewald: History of Israel, vol. i., Tübingen, 1843; London, 1869. Hävernick: Introduction to the Pentateuch, Erlangen, 1837; Edinburgh, 1850. Hengstenberg: The Genuineness of the Pentateuch, Berlin, 1831—1839; Edinburgh, 1847. Keil: Introduction to the Old Testament, Dorpat, 1868; Edinburgh, 1869. Kurtz: History of the Old Covenant, Berlin, 1853; Edinburgh, 1859. Oehler: Theology of the Old Testament, Tübingen, 1873; Edinburgh, 1874.

2. *English.* Colenso: The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined, London, 1862—1871. Davidson: Introduction to the Old Testament, London, 1862. Horne: Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures, London, 1856 (tenth edition). Hamilton: The Pentateuch and its Assailants, Edinburgh, 1852. Macdonald· Introduction to the Pentateuch, Edinburgh, 1861. Quarry: Genesis and its Authorship, London, 1873.

II. Commentaries. 1. *Patristic.* The writings of Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Theodoret, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine.

2. *Rabbinical.* The works of Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and David Kimchi.

3. *Reformation.* Luther: Enarrationes in Primum librum Mose, Wittemberg, 1544; republished by Hengstenberg, Berlin, 1831. Calvin: Commentarii in Genesin, Geneva, 1563. Mercerus: Commentarius in Genesin, Geneva, 1598. Drusius: Ad loca difficiliora Pentateuchi, Franeker, 1617. Grotius: Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum, Paris, 1641. Clericus: Translatio librorum V. T. cum paraphrasi perpetua, Comment. philol., dissertt. critt., &c., Amsterdam, 1693—1731. Venema: Dissertationes ad Genesin, 1747. Dathius: Pentateuchus ex recensione Textus Hebræi, Leipsic, 1791. Amongst Roman Catholic writers should be mentioned Pererius: Commentarii et disputationes in Genesin, Lugduni, 1594. Amongst English works, Willet's Hexapla, London, 1632; the Critici Sacri, London, 1690; and M. Poli, Synopsis Criticorum, London, 1699, in which the opinions of the Reformers and their successors are collected.

4. *Modern.* (1) Foreign. *Exegetical:*—Delitzsch: Commentary on Genesis, third edition, Leipsic, 1860. Keil and Delitzsch: Commentary on the Pentateuch, Leipsic, 1861; Edinburgh, 1864. Lange: Commentary on Genesis, Bohn, 1864; Edinburgh, 1868. Rosenmüller: Scholia in Genesin, Leipsic, 1821. *Theological:*—Baumgarten: Commentary on the Old Testament, Keil, 1843. *Popular:*—Von Gerlach: Commentary on the Pentateuch, 1801—1849. (2) English:—Ainsworth: Annotations on the Pentateuch, Edinburgh, 1843. Alford: Genesis, and Part of Exodus, for English Readers, London, 1877. Browne (Bishop of Ely): Vol. i. of Speaker's Commentary, London, 1871. Inglis: Notes on Genesis, Edinburgh, 1877. Jamieson: Vol. i. of the Critical and Experimental Commentary, Edinburgh, 1863. Kalisch: Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament, London, 1858. Macdonald: Creation and the Fall: a Defence and Exposition, London and Edinburgh, 1856. Murphy: Commentary on Genesis, Edinburgh, 1863. Patrick (Bishop of Ely): A Commentary upon the Historical Books of the Old Testament: London, 1727.

Wordsworth: The Holy Bible, with Notes, London, 1864. Wright: The Book of Genesis, London, 1859. (3) American:—Bush: Notes on Genesis, New York, 1838. Jacobus: Notes, Critical and Explanatory, on Genesis, New York, 1865. Turner: Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, New York, 1846.

III. Homiletical and practical expositions. In addition to the well-known Commentaries of A. Clarke, M. Henry, and Thomas Scott, to this department may be assigned:—Bonar: Earth's Morning, or Thoughts on the First Six Chapters of Genesis, London, 1875. Candlish: The Book of Genesis expounded in a Series of Discourses, Edinburgh, 1868. Exell: A Homiletical Commentary on Genesis, London, 1875 (*incomplete*). Fuller: Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis London, 1836. Gray: The Biblical Museum, London, 1876. Hughes: An Analytical Exposition of the First Book of Moses, 1672. Ness: History and Mystery, London, 1690—1696. Robertson, F. W.: Notes on Genesis, London, 1877. White: A Commentary upon the First Three Chapters of Genesis, London, 1656.

IV. General literature. Blunt: The History of Abraham, London, 1842. Bonnet: The Exile from Eden; Meditations on the Third Chapter, London, 1839. Bouchier: The History of Isaac, London, 1864. Dawson: The Origin of the World, London, 1877. Dykes: Abraham the Friend of God, London, 1877. Grant: The Bible Record true in every Age, London, 1877. Hengstenberg: Egypt and the Books of Moses, Edinburgh, 1845. Kitto: Bible Illustrations, Edinburgh, 1855. Lawson: Lectures on Joseph, Edinburgh, 1807; new edition, 1878. Overton: The Life of Joseph, London, 1866. Rawlinson: Ancient Monarchies, vol. i., London, 1871. Roberts: Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures, London, 1835. Records of the Past: Biblical Archæological Society, London, 1875 (*publishing*). Robinson: Biblical Researches in Palestine, London, 1841. Sandys: In the Beginning, London, 1879. Smith: Assyrian Discoveries, London, 1875. Smith: Chaldean Account of Genesis, London, 1876. Smith (Thornley): The Life of Joseph, Edinburgh, 1875. Stanley: Sinai and Palestine, London, 1856; Lectures on Jewish Church, London, 1866. Tristram: The Land of Israel, London, 1865; The Land of Moab, London, 1873. Thomson: The Land and the Book, London, 1870. Wilkinson: Manners of the Ancient Egyptians, London, 1847.

For a more detailed account of the literature of Genesis, the works of Kurtz, Lange, and Rosenmüller may be consulted.

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(1) Abram is called, xii. 1—3; (2) enters Canaan, xii. 4—9; descends to Egypt, xii. 10—20; returns to Canaan, xiii. 1—4; separates from Lot, xiii. 5—18; pursues the kings, xiv. 1—16; meets with Melchisedeck, xiv. 17—24; is justified, xv. 1—6; and taken into covenant with God, xv. 7—21; marries Hagar, xvi. 1—16; receives the sign of circumcision, xvii. 1—27; is visited by Jehovah at Mamre, xviii. 1—8; and obtains the promise of Isaac, xviii. 9—15; intercedes for Sodom, xviii. 16—33; which is soon thereafter destroyed, xix. 1—38; sojourns in Gerar, xx. 1—18; rejoices in Isaac's birth, xxi. 1—8; casts out Ishmael, xxi. 9—21; covenants with Abimelech at Beersheba, xxi. 22—34; offers up Isaac on Moriah, xxii. 1—24; is bereaved of Sarah, whom he buries in Machpelah, xxiii. 1—20; commissions Eliezer to find a bride for Isaac, xxiv. 1—67; enters into a second marriage with Keturah, xxv. 1—6; and ultimately dies, xxv. 7—11.

§ 8. THE GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL. xxv. 12—18.

§ 9. THE GENERATIONS OF ISAAC. xxv. 19—xxxv. 29.

1. The birth and early history of Isaac's sons. xxv. 19—34.
2. The subsequent career of Isaac. xxvi. 1—35.
3. The blessing of Jacob by Isaac. xxvii. 1—46.
4. The fortunes of Isaac's heir. xxviii. 1—xxxv. 26. Jacob departs to Padan-aram, xxviii. 1—xxxv. 26; sees God at Bethel, xxviii. 10—22; arrives at Haran, xxix. 1—14; marries Leah and Rachel, xxix. 15—35; serves with Laban, xxx. 1—43; flees from Laban, xxxi. 1—55; is met by angels at Mahanaim, xxxii. 1—12; sends a message to Esau, xxxii. 13—23; wrestles with an angel, xxxii. 24—32; is reconciled to Esau, xxxiii. 1—20; hears of his daughter's defilement, xxxiv. 1—31; revisits Bethel, xxxv. 1—15; is bereaved of Rachel, xxxv. 16—20; returns to Isaac at Mamre, xxxv. 27.
5. The death of Isaac. xxxv. 27—29.

§ 10. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU. xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 1.

§ 11. THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB. xxxvii. 2—l. 26.

1. The wickedness of Jacob's sons. xxxvii. 2—xxxviii. 30.
   (1) Joseph hated by his brethren. xxxvii. 2—36.
   (2) The sins of Judah and Onan. xxxviii. 1—30.
2. The fortunes of Joseph in Egypt. xxxix. 1—xli. 57.
   (1) His imprisonment by Potiphar. xxxix. 1—23.
   (2) His advancement by Pharaoh. xl. 1—xli. 57.
3. The famine in the land of Canaan. xlii. 1—xlv. 28.
   (1) The descent of Jacob's sons to Egypt without Benjamin. xlii. 1—38.
   (2) The second journey to Egypt with Benjamin. xliii. 1—34.
   (3) The stratagem of Joseph to detain Benjamin. xliv. 1—34.
   (4) Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren, and invitation of his father to visit Egypt. xlv. 1—28.
4. The descent of Jacob to Egypt. xlvi. 1—xlvii. 10.
   (1) The departure from Beersheba. xlvi. 1—27.
   (2) The arrival at Goshen. xlvi. 28—34.
   (3) The presentation to Pharaoh. xlvii. 1—10.
5. The settlement of Jacob and his family in Egypt. xlvii. 11—26.
6. The last days of Jacob in Egypt. xlvii. 27—xlix. 32.
   (1) The charge given to Joseph. xlvii. 27—31.
   (2) The blessing of Joseph's sons. xlviii. 1—22.
   (3) The last prophetic utterance. xlix. 1—28.
   (4) The charge concerning his burial. xlix. 29—32.
7. The death of Jacob in Egypt. xlix. 33—l. 14.
   (1) The mourning for Jacob. l. 1—7.
   (2) The funeral of Jacob. l. 7—14.
8. The last of Jacob's sons. l. 15—26.
   (1) The fear of Joseph's brethren. l. 15—21.
   (2) The death of Joseph. l. 22—26.

THE

BOOK OF GENESIS.

THE PRIMEVAL AGE OF THE WORLD (Chs. I.—IX.).

FROM THE CREATION TO THE DELUGE.

§ 1. The Beginning (Ch. I. 1—II. 3).

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER I.

I. That this initial section is not *history* is apparent from the circumstance that the occurrences it describes belong to a period of time which antedates the dawn of history. That it is not *science* is evinced by the fact that, in some, at least, of its particulars, it refers to a condition of our globe concerning which even modern research has attained to no definite conclusions, while in all of them it claims to be regarded not as uttering the findings of reason, but as declaring the course of nature. That still less can it be *myth* must be obvious to any who will carefully contrast it with those heathen cosmogonies which it is said to resemble. Only the most absolute devotion to preconceived opinion can render one oblivious of its immense superiority to them in respect of both simplicity of construction and sublimity of conception. The absurdities, puerilities, and monstrosities that abound in them are conspicuously absent from it. It alone ascends to the idea of a creation *ex nihilo*, and of a supreme Intelligence by whom that creation is effected. Unlike them, it is destitute of either local colouring or national peculiarity, being no more Jewish than it is Assyrian or Indian, Persian or Egyptian. The inspired original, of which heathen creation-stories are the corrupted traditions, it may be; impartial reason and honest criticism alike forbid its relegation to a common category with them. Since, then, it is neither history, nor science, nor mythology, it must be REVELATION: unless indeed it be regarded as either "the recorded intuition of the first man, handed down by tradition," a theory successfully demonstrated by Kurtz to be altogether inadequate, or the inductive speculation of some primitive cosmogonist, a solution of its genesis scarcely less satisfactory. To characterise it as *a pious fraud*, of post-Mosaic origin, written to uphold the Jewish week cycle and the institution of the Jewish sabbath, is not only to negative its inspiration, but to invalidate the Divine authority of the whole book, to which it serves as an introduction. Happily its *inspiration* is a much less violent supposition than its *invention*, and one which is susceptible of almost perfect demonstration. Rightly viewed, its inspiration is involved in

the simpler question of its truthfulness. If the Mosaic cosmogony is true, it can only have been given by inspiration; and that it is true may be said to be, with rapidly augmenting emphasis, the verdict of science.

II. As to the precise manner in which it was imparted to its author, THE VISION THEORY of Kurtz, though declared by Kalisch to be "a complicated tissue of conjectures and assumptions *utterly destitute of every, the faintest and remotest, Biblical foundation*," is perhaps, with certain modifications, the best. Rejecting the idea of a series of creative tableaux without any solid substratum of actual fact, there is clearly nothing in the nature of the case to discredit the hypothesis that the far past may have been disclosed to the writer of this ancient document in the same fashion as we know the remote future was discovered to the later prophets. On the contrary, there is much in Scripture to warrant the assumption that, as Daniel heard "the speaking between the banks of the Ulai," and received dream-revelations of the four great world monarchies, and as John beheld visions and heard voices concerning the things which were shortly to come to pass, so the Jewish lawgiver, or the primitive *Nabi* to whom this revelation was imparted, may have beheld in sublime panorama the evolution of the light, the uplifting of the atmosphere, the parting of the waters, the placing of the orbs, the filling of the land, sea, and sky with life, while he listened with awestruck silence to the voices of Elohim, as they were uttered at the opening of each creative day. Something like this, Professor Lewis aptly remarks, appears necessary to explain the reception by the prophet's mind of those ineffable ideas of which previously he had no types or conceptions.

III. Though not *poetical* in the sense of being composed in ornate and figurative language, the present section may be truthfully described as *rhythmical* in structure, possessing an artificial and orderly arrangement, much obscured by its division in the English version into chapters and verses, which almost justifies its designation as The Primeval Song, or Hymn of Creation, with which may be compared the lyric poem in Ps. civ., and the post-Exilian ode in Ps. cxxxvi., in both of which a Hebrew bard recites the story of creation.

Ver. 1.—**In the beginning**, *Bereshith*, is neither "from eternity," as in John i. 1; nor "in wisdom" (Chaldee paraphrase), as if parallel with Prov. iii. 19 and Ps. civ. 24; nor "by Christ," who, in Col. i. 18, is denominated ἀρχή; but "at the commencement of time." Without indicating *when* the beginning was, the expression intimates *that* the beginning was. Exod. xx. 11 seems to imply that this was the initiation of the first day's work. The formula, "And God said," with which each day opens, rather points to ver. 3 as its proper *terminus a quo*, which the beginning absolute may have antedated by an indefinite period. **God.** *Elohim* (either *the highest Being to be feared*, from *alah*, to fear,—Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Keil, Oehler, &c., — or, more probably, *the strong and mighty One*, from *aûl*, to be strong—Gesenius, Lange, Tayler Lewis, Macdonald, Murphy, &c.) is the most frequent designation of the Supreme Being in the Old Testament, occurring upwards of 2000 times, and is exclusively employed in the present section. Its plural form is to be explained neither as a remnant of polytheism (Gesenius), nor as indicating a plurality of beings through whom the Deity reveals himself (Baumgarten, Lange), nor as a plural of majesty (Aben Ezra, Kalisch, Alford), like the royal "we" of earthly potentates, a usage which the best Hebraists affirm to have no existence in the Scriptures (Macdonald), nor as a cumulative plural, answering the same purpose as a repetition of the Divine name (Hengstenberg, Dreschler, and others); but either (1) as a *pluralis intensitatis*, expressive of the fulness of the Divine nature, and the multiplicity of the Divine powers (Delitzsch, Murphy, Macdonald); or, (2) notwithstanding Calvin's dread of Sabellianism, as a *pluralis trinitatis*, intended to foreshadow the threefold personality of the Godhead (Luther, Cocceius, Peter Lombard, Murphy, Candlish, &c.); or (3) both. The suggestion of Tayler Lewis, that the term may be a contraction for El-Elohim, the God of all superhuman powers, is inconsistent with neither of the above interpretations. That the Divine name should adjust itself without difficulty to all subsequent discoveries of the fulness of the Divine personality and nature is only what we should expect in a God-given revelation. Unless where it refers to the angels (Ps. viii. 5), or to heathen deities (Gen. xxxi. 32; Exod. xx. 3; Jer. xvi. 20), or to earthly rulers (Exod. xxii. 8, 9), *Elohim* is conjoined with verbs and adjectives in the singular, an anomaly in language which has been explained as suggesting the unity of

the Godhead. **Created.** *Bara*, one of three terms employed in this section, and in Scripture generally, to describe the Divine activity; the other two being *yatzar*, "formed," and *asah*, "made"—both signifying to construct out of pre-existing materials (cf. for *yatzar*, ch. ii. 7; viii. 19; Ps. xxxiii. 15; Isa. xliv. 9; for *asah*, ch. viii. 6; Exod. v. 16; Deut. iv. 16), and predicable equally of God and man. *Bara* is used exclusively of God. Though not necessarily involved in its significance, the idea of creation *ex nihilo* is acknowledged by the best expositors to be here intended. Its employment in vers. 21, 26, though seemingly against, is really in favour of a distinctively creative act; in both of these instances something that did not previously exist, *i. e.* animal life and the human spirit, having been called into being. In the sense of producing what is new it frequently occurs in Scripture (cf. Ps. li. 12; Jer. xxxi. 12; Isa. lxv. 18). Thus, according to the teaching of this venerable document, the visible universe neither existed from eternity, nor was fashioned out of pre-existing materials, nor proceeded forth as an emanation from the Absolute, but was summoned into being by an express creative fiat. The New Testament boldly claims this as a doctrine peculiar to revelation (Heb. xi. 3). Modern science explicitly disavows it as a discovery of reason. The continuity of force admits of neither creation nor annihilation, but demands an unseen universe, out of which the visible has been produced "by an intelligent agency residing in the unseen," and into which it must eventually return ('The Unseen Universe,' pp. 167, 170). Whether the language of the writer to the Hebrews homologates the dogma of an "unseen universe" (μὴ φαινομένων), out of which τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι, the last result of science, as expressed by the authors of the above-named work, is practically an admission of the Biblical doctrine of creation. **The heavens and the earth** (i. e. *mundus universus*—Gesenius, Kalisch, &c. Cf. ch. ii. 1; xiv. 19, 22; Ps. cxv. 15; Jer. xxiii. 24. The earth and the heavens always mean the terrestrial globe with its aerial firmament. Cf. ch. ii. 4; Ps. cxlviii. 13; Zech. v. 9). The earth here alluded to is manifestly not the dry land (ver. 10), which was not separated from the waters till the third day, but the entire mass of which our planet is composed, including the superincumbent atmosphere, which was not uplifted from the chaotic deep until the second day. The heavens are the rest of the universe. The Hebrews were aware of other heavens than the "firmament" or gaseous expanse which over-arches the earth. "Tres regiones," says Poole, "ubi aves, ubi nubes, ubi sidera." But, beyond these, the Shemitic mind conceived of the heaven where the angels dwell (1 Kings xxii. 19; Matt. xviii. 10), and where God specially resides (Deut. xxvi. 15; 1 Kings viii. 30; Ps. ii. 4), if, indeed, this latter was not distinguished as a more exalted region than that occupied by any creature—as "the heaven of heavens," the pre-eminently sacred abode of the Supreme (Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cv. 16). The fundamental idea associated with the term was that of height (*shamayim*, literally, "the heights"—Gesenius, Fürst). To the Greek mind heaven meant "the boundary" (οὐρανος, from ὁρος—Arist.), or, "the raised up" (from ὀρ—to be prominent—Liddell and Scott). The Latin spoke of "the concavity" (*cœlum*, allied to κοῖλος, hollow), or "the engraved" (from *cœlo*, to engrave). The Saxon thought of "the heaved-up arch." The Hebrew imagined great spaces rising tier upon tier above the earth (which, in contradistinction, was named "the flats"), just as with regard to time he spoke of *olamim* (Gr. αἰῶνες). Though not anticipating modern astronomical discovery, he had yet enlarged conceptions of the dimensions of the stellar world (Gen. xv. 5; Isa. xl. 26; Jer. xxxi. 37; Amos ix. 6); and, though unacquainted with our present geographical ideas of the earth's configuration, he was able to represent it as a globe, and as suspended upon nothing (Isa. xl. 11; Job xxvi. 7—10; Prov. viii. 27). The connection of the present verse with those which follow has been much debated. The proposal of Aben Ezra, adopted by Calvin, to read, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was . . . .," is grammatically inadmissible. Equally objectionable on the ground of grammar is the suggestion of Bunsen and Ewald, to connect the first verse with the third, and make the second parenthetical; while it is opposed to that simplicity of construction which pervades the chapter. The device of Drs. Buckland and Chalmers, so favourably regarded by some harmonists of Scripture and geology, to read the first verse as a heading to the whole section, is exploded by the fact that no historical narration can begin with "and." To this Exod. i. 1 is no exception, the second book of Moses being in reality a continuation of the first. Honest exegesis requires that ver. 1 shall be viewed as descriptive of the first of the series of Divine acts detailed in the chapter, and that ver. 2, while admitting of an interval, shall be held as coming in immediate succession—an interpretation, it may be said, which is fatal to the theory which discovers the geologic ages between the creative beginning and primeval chaos.

Ver. 2.—**And the earth.** Clearly the earth

referred to in the preceding verse, the present terrestrial globe with its atmospheric firmament, and not simply "the land" as opposed to "the skies" (Murphy); certainly not "the heavens" of ver. 1 as well as the earth (Delitzsch); and least of all "a section of the dry land in Central Asia" (Buckland, Pye Smith). It is a sound principle of exegesis that a word shall retain the meaning it at first possesses till either intimation is made by the writer of a change in its significance, or such change is imperatively demanded by the necessities of the context, neither of which is the case here. **Was.** Not "had become." **Without form and void.** Literally, wasteness and emptiness, *tohu vabohu.* The words are employed in Isa. xxxiv. 11 and Jer. iv. 23 to depict the desolation and desertion of a ruined and depopulated land, and by many have been pressed into service to support the idea of a preceding cosmos, of which the chaotic condition of our planet was the wreck (Murphy, Wordsworth, Bush, &c). Delitzsch argues, on the ground that *tohu vabohu* implies the ruin of a previous cosmos, that ver. 2 does not state specifically that God created the earth in this desolate and waste condition; and that death, which is inconceivable out of connection with sin, was in the world prior to the fall; that ver. 2 presupposes the fall of the angels, and adduces in support of his view Job xxxviii. 4—7 ('Bib. Psychology,' sect. i. p. 76; Clark's 'For. Theol. Lib.')—a notion which Kalisch contemptuously classes among "the aberrations of profound minds," and "the endless reveries" of "far-sighted thinkers." Bush is confident that Isa. xlv. 18, in which Jehovah declares that he created not the earth *tohu,* is conclusive against a primeval chaos. The parallel clause, however, shows that not the original state, but the ultimate design of the globe, was contemplated in Jehovah's language: "He created it not *tohu,* he formed it to be inhabited;" *i. e.* the Creator did not intend the earth to be a desolate region, but an inhabited planet. There can scarcely be a doubt, then, that the expression portrays the condition in which the new-created earth was, not innumerable ages, but very shortly, after it was summoned into existence. It was formless and lifeless; a huge, shapeless, objectless, tenantless mass of matter, the gaseous and solid elements commingled, in which neither organised structure, nor animated form, nor even distinctly-traced outline of any kind appeared. **And darkness (was) upon the face of the deep.** The "deep," from a root signifying to disturb, is frequently applied to the sea (Ps. xlii. 8), and here probably intimates that the primordial matter of our globe existed in a fluid, or liquid, or molten form. Dawson distinguishes between "the deep" and the "waters," making the latter refer to the liquid condition of the globe, and the former apply to "the atmospheric waters," *i. e.* the vaporous or aeriform mass mantling the surface of our nascent planet, and containing the materials out of which the atmosphere was afterwards elaborated ('Origin of the World,' p. 105). As yet the whole was shrouded in the thick folds of Cimmerian gloom, giving not the slightest promise of that fair world of light, order, and life into which it was about to be transformed. Only one spark of hope might have been detected in the circumstance that **the Spirit of God moved** (literally, brooding) **upon the face of the waters.** That the *Ruach Elohim,* or breath of God, was not "a great wind," or "a wind of God," is determined by the non-existence of the air at this particular stage in the earth's development. In accordance with Biblical usage generally, it must be regarded as a designation not simply "of the Divine power, which, like the wind and the breath, cannot be perceived" (Gesenius), but of the Holy Spirit, who is uniformly represented as the source or formative cause of all life and order in the world, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual (cf. Job xxvi. 13; xxvii. 3; Ps. xxxiii. 6; civ. 29; cxliii. 10; Isa. xxxiv. 16; lxi. 1; lxiii. 11). As it were, the mention of the *Ruach Elohim* is the first out-blossoming of the latent fulness of the Divine personality, the initial movement in that sublime revelation of the nature of the Godhead, which, advancing slowly, and at the best but indistinctly, throughout Old Testament times, culminated in the clear and ample disclosures of the gospel. The special form of this Divine agent's activity is described as that of "brooding" (*merachepheth,* from *rachaph,* to be tremulous, as with love; hence, in Piel, to cherish young—Deut. xxxii. 11) or fluttering over the liquid elements of the shapeless and tenantless globe, communicating to them, doubtless, those formative powers of life and order which were to burst forth into operation in answer to the six words of the six ensuing days. As might have been anticipated, traces of this primeval chaos are to be detected in various heathen cosmogonies, as the following brief extracts will show:—1. The *Chaldean* legend, deciphered from the creation tablet discovered in the palace of Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, B.C. 885, depicts the desolate and void condition of the earth thus:—

"When above were not raised the heavens,
And below on the earth a plant had not grown up;
The abyss also had not broken up their boundaries;

The chaos (or water) tiamat (the sea) was the producing-mother of the whole of them," &c.
('Chaldean Genesis,' p. 62.)

2. The *Babylonian* cosmogony, according to Berosus (B.C. 330—260), commences with a time "in which there existed nothing but darkness and an abyss of waters, wherein resided most hideous beings, which were produced of a twofold principle. . . . . The person who presided over them was a woman named Omoroca, which in the Chaldean language is Thalatth, in Greek Thalassa, the sea, but which might equally be interpreted the moon" ('Chaldean Genesis,' pp. 40, 41). 3. The *Egyptian* account of the origin of the universe, as given by Diodorus Siculus, represents the heaven and earth as blended together, till afterwards the elements began to separate and the air to move. According to another idea, there was a vast abyss enveloped in boundless darkness, with a subtle spirit, intellectual in power, existing in the chaos (Macdonald, 'Creation and the Fall,' p. 49). 4. The *Phœnician* cosmogony says, "The first principle of the universe was a dark windy air and an eternal dark chaos. Through the love of the Spirit to its own principles a mixture arose, and a connection called desire, the beginning of all things. From this connection of the Spirit was begotten *mot*, which, according to some, signifies *mud*, according to others, a corruption of a watery mixture, but is probably a feminine form of *mo*, water. From this were developed creatures in the shape of an egg, called zophasemin" (Macdonald, p. 50). 5. The *Indian* mythology is very striking in its resemblance to the Mosaic narrative. The institutes of Menu affirm that at first all was dark, the world still resting in the purpose of the Eternal, whose first thought created water, and in it the seed of life. This became an egg, from which issued Brahma, the creative power, who divided his own substance and became male and female. The waters were called *nárá*, as being the production of Nara, or the Spirit of God, who, on account of these being his first *ayana*, or place of motion, is named Náráyana, or *moving on the waters*. A remarkable hymn from the Rig Veda, translated by Dr. Max Müller, also closely approximates to the Scriptural account:—

"Nor aught nor nought existed; yon bright sky
Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched above.
The only one breathed breathless by itself;
Other than it there nothing since hath been.
Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
In gloom profound—an ocean without light."
(*Vid.* Macdonald's 'Creation,' &c., p. 51.)

6. The description of chaos given by Ovid is too appropriate to be overlooked:—

"Ante mare et tellus, et, quod tegit omnia, cælum,
Unus erat toto naturæ vultus in orbe,
Quem dixêre chaos; rudis indigestaque moles
. . . . quia corpore in uno
Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis,
Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus" ('Metamor.,' lib. i. 1).

Yet not more remarkable are these indirect confirmations of the truthfulness of the Biblical cosmogony than the direct corroborations it derives from the discoveries of modern science. (1) The *nebular hypothesis* of Laplace, which, though only a hypothesis, must yet be admitted to possess a high degree of probability, strikingly attests its authenticity. That eminent astronomer demonstrated that a huge chaotic mass of nebulous matter, revolving in space on its own axis with a sufficient velocity, and gradually condensing from a high degree of heat, would eventually, by throwing off successive rings from the parent body, develop all the celestial orbs that presently compose our planetary system. Though for a long time regarded with suspicion by Biblical scholars, and at the first only tentatively thrown out by its author, Kant, yet so exactly does it account for the phenomena of our solar system as disclosed by the telescope, that it may now be said to have vindicated its claim to be accepted as the best solution science has to give of the formation of the universe; while further and more dispassionate reflection has convinced theologians generally, that so far from conflicting with the utterances of inspiration, it rather surprisingly endorses them. (2) The researches of *physical philosophy* in connection with hydrodynamics have successfully established that the present form of our earth, that of (the solid of revolution called) an oblate spheroid, is such as it must necessarily have assumed had its original condition been that of a liquid mass revolving round its own axis. (3) *Geological science* likewise contributes its quota to the constantly accumulating weight of evidence in support of the Mosaic narrative, by announcing, as the result of its investigations in connection with the earth's crust, that below a certain point, called "the stratum of invariable temperature," the heat of the interior mass becomes greater in proportion to the depth beneath the surface, thus leading not unnaturally to the inference that

"the earth has assumed its present state by cooling down from an intensely heated, or gaseous, or fluid state" (Green's 'Geology,' p. 487).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1.—*The visible universe.* I. ONE, yet NOT SIMPLE. 1. *One.* In age, origin, and nature one, "the heavens and the earth" also constitute one vast system. Cohering physically through the force of gravitation, which, in its ultimate analysis, is simply an expression of the Divine power, they are unified spiritually by Christ, who is the impersonation of the Divine wisdom and love (John i. 3, 9; Col. i. 15, 17). Hence, as constituting one stupendous system, they are not independent, but mutually influential—*physically* according to science, *spiritually* according to Scripture (Luke xv. 7, 10; Ephes. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12, &c.). Yet—2. *Not simple*, but complex, consisting of two parts—of this mundane sphere, with its diversified contents of men, animals, and plants; and of those shining heavens, with their starry hosts and angelic races. Hence the histories of those two realms may be widely divergent—an inference which astronomy warrants as to their physical developments, and revelation endorses with regard to their spiritual experiences. Hence to argue from the one to the other is to reason hypothetically; as, *e. g.*, to conclude that the planets must be inhabited because the earth is, or to affirm that the Divine treatment of the human and angelic races must of necessity be alike.

II. VAST, yet NOT INFINITE. 1. *Vast.* Enlarged as were Shemitic notions of the dimensions of God's universe, modern astronomy, by the grandeur and sublimity of its revelations, gives definite shape to what were then only vague and shadowy conceptions. Imagination becomes bewildered in the attempt to comprehend the circle of the universe. Commencing with the sun, the central body of our planetary system, with a diameter about three times our distance from the moon, and passing, on her outward journey, no fewer than seven worlds in addition to our own, most of them immensely larger, she only reaches the outskirts of the first department of creation at a distance of 2,853,800,000 miles. Then, when to this is added that the nearest fixed star is so remote that three years are required for its light to reach the earth; that from some of the more distant nebulæ the light has been travelling for millions of years; that the number of the stars is practically infinite; and that each of them may be the centre of a system more resplendent than our own,—even then it is but a faint conception which she reaches of the dimensions of the universe (Job xxvi. 14). Yet—2. It is *not infinite.* Immeasurable by man, it has already been measured by God (Isa. xl. 12). Undiscoverable by science, its limits are known to its Creator (Acts xv. 18). The stars which man is unable to compute God calls by their names (Ps. cxlvii. 4; Isa. xl. 26). That the universe must have a boundary is involved in its creation. Two finites cannot make an infinite. Hence the *measured* earth (Hab. iii. 6) and the *bounded* heavens (Job xxii. 14) cannot compose an illimitable universe. Still less can there be two infinites, one filling all space, and another outside of it. But Elohim is such an infinite (Isa. lvii. 15; Jer. xxiii. 24); hence the universe is not such another.

III. OLD, yet NOT ETERNAL. 1. *Old.* How old God has not revealed and man has not discovered; geology and astronomy both say millions of years; one hundred millions at least, Sir W. Thomson alleges the sun to have been burning. Genesis gives ample scope to physicists in their researches by saying they may go as far back as "the beginning;" only that beginning they must find. For — 2. The universe is *not eternal,* though its antiquity be vast. The frequency and certainty with which Scripture enunciates the non-eternity of the material universe is one of its most distinguishing characteristics (Ps. xc. 1; cii. 25, 26; Heb. i. 10). This may also now be regarded as the last word of science: "We have thus reached the beginning as well as the end of the present visible universe, and have come to the conclusion that it began in time, and will in time come to an end" ('The Unseen Universe,' p. 93).

IV. EXISTENT, yet NOT SELF-EXISTENT. 1. *Existent;* i. e. standing out as an entity in the infinite realm of space; standing out from eternity in the sphere of

time; and also standing out from God, as essentially distinct from his personality. Yet—2. *Not self-existent*, not standing there in virtue of its own inherent energy, being neither self-produced nor self-sustained; but standing solely and always in obedience to the creative fiat of Elohim, the almighty and self-existent God.

Ver. 2.—*Chaos an emblem of the unrenewed soul.* I. WITHOUT ORDER: existing in a state of spiritual ruin, and requiring a special process of rearrangement to evolve symmetry and beauty from its confusion (2 Cor. v. 16).

II. WITHOUT LIFE: being dead in trespasses and sins (Ephes. ii. 1); absolutely "void" in the sense of being untenanted by lofty thoughts, pure emotions, holy volitions, spiritual imaginations, such as are the inmates of sinless and, in great part also, of renewed souls.

III. WITHOUT LIGHT: shrouded in darkness (Ephes. iv. 18); walking, perhaps, in the sparks that its own fire has kindled (Isa. l. 11), but devoid of that true light which is from heaven (John i. 9).

IV. Yet NOT WITHOUT GOD. As the Spirit brooded over chaos, so does God's Holy Spirit hover over fallen souls, waiting, as it were, for the forthcoming and insounding of the commanding word to introduce light, order, life.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—"Beginning" is a word familiarly on our lips; but, for the most part, we mean only rearrangement, or the commencement of one link in the chain of events. But who can conceive the beginning of creation? Who can travel back in thought to the first moment of its existence, and look into the eternity beyond? The Bible carries us back to that beginning, the first moment when the universe existed. How far back was the starting-point of time we know not, nor in what form the universe came into being, whether completed, or in germs to be developed in the course of ages. Only we are taught that before that "beginning" the universe was not, and that "the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. xi. 3)—their substance, and the laws by which they are governed. With this the conclusions of science agree. They point out that the forces of nature tend to extinction, and hence must have had a beginning. To the question what was that beginning, the Bible gives the answer. 1. *What was before the "beginning"?* God was; he created all (Ps. xc. 2); and if it surpass our power to conceive an eternal self-existent Being, still less can we realise life, power, law coming into existence without a cause. And "in the beginning was the Word;" and the Holy Ghost, through whom Christ offered himself (Heb. ix. 14). But further, before the beginning the Lamb was slain (Rev. xiii. 8)—*i. e.* the necessity for redemption was foreseen and the plan provided—and we were chosen (Ephes. i. 4), and a kingdom prepared for us (Matt. xxv. 34). Thus, redemption was no afterthought, no repairing of failure; but God's purpose from eternity, and therefore that which is best. 2. *What was the "beginning"?* The creation of a field on which God's plans were to be carried out and his perfections manifested. And in the course of his work the creation of beings to whom and in whom he might make himself known, who might glorify him here and enjoy him for ever. 3. *We mark then*—At the beginning God brought forth what had been ordained in eternity—his plan complete to the end—our salvation—redemption as well as creation. "Very good" (Gen. i. 31) went far beyond the things then existing on the earth. And if it be urged, How is "very good" consistent with sin?—An enemy has sown tares and marred the Creator's work—the world is a ruin. Oh, faithless! why fearful? If God could give life to dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii. 6), if he could of stones raise up children to Abraham, can he not out of seeming ruin raise up a more glorious temple? But thou sayest, How can this be? Canst thou solve one of the least mysteries of creation? And is it strange thou canst not solve that mystery into which angels desire to look? Enough to know "where sin abounded," &c. (Rom. v. 20); to remember, "we see not yet," &c. (Heb. ii. 8); and humbly to wait our Father's time and way. 4. *For personal encouragement.* Our state foreseen and provided for from the beginning. Thus our right to trust God's promises

depends not on anything in us, but is part of his original plan. Our Lord's call to sinners is in closest agreement with what was ordained "in the beginning." "Whosoever will" (Rev. xxii. 17) but echoes the word which called the universe into being.—M.

Vers. 1—5.—A true and firm foundation of revelation and faith must be laid in a Divine doctrine of "Genesis," the *beginnings* out of which have come both the world of nature and the world of grace. In this book we are taught what is the *order* by which all things must be tried. Coming forth from Elohim, from the Infinite Personality; flowing in his appointed course. The genesis of *heaven and earth* becomes the genesis of *the human family*. Out of the *natural chaos* is brought forth the *Eden* of rest and beauty. Out of the *moral waste* of a fallen humanity is formed, by the gracious work of a Divine Spirit, through a covenant of infinite wisdom and love, a seed of redeemed and sanctified human beings, a *family of God*. The genesis of the *material creation* leads on to the genesis of the *invisible creation*. The lower is the type and symbol of the higher. The *first day* is the true beginning of days. See what is placed by the sacred writer between that evening and morning.

I. THE COMING FORTH OF THE EVERLASTING, UNSEARCHABLE SECRET OF THE DIVINE NATURE INTO MANIFESTATION. "*God created.*" The word employed denotes more than the bare summoning of existence out of nothingness. The analogy of human workmanship ("cutting," "carving," "framing") suggests the relation between creation and the God of creation. The heaven and the earth reflect their Maker. Works embody the mind, the spirit, the will, the nature of the workman. Although the name *Elohim*, in the plural form, cannot be taken as an equivalent of the Trinity, it points to the great fundamental fact of all revelation, the Divine Unity coming forth out of the infinite solitude of eternity, and declaring, in the manifold revelations of the visible and invisible worlds, all that the creature can know of his fathomless mystery.

II. HERE IS A GLIMPSE INTO GOD'S ORDER AND METHOD. "*In the beginning,*" the immeasurable fulness of creative power and goodness. Formless void, darkness on the face of the deep, apparent confusion and emptiness, within a limited sphere, the earth; at a certain epoch, in preparation for an appointed future. *Chaos* is not the first beginning of things; it is a stage in their history. The evening of the first day preceded the morning in the recorded annals of the earth. That evening was itself a veiling of the light. Science itself leads back the thoughts from all chaotic periods to previous developments of power. *Order precedes disorder.* Disorder is itself permitted only as a temporary state. It is itself part of the *genesis* of that which shall be ultimately "*very good.*"

III. THE GREAT VITAL FACT OF THE WORLD'S ORDER IS THE INTIMATE UNION BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND THAT WHICH IS COVERED WITH DARKNESS UNTIL HE MAKES IT LIGHT. The moving of the Spirit upon the face of the waters represents the brooding, cherishing, vitalising presence of God in his creatures, over them, around them, at once the source and protection of their life. "*Breath;*" "*wind,*" the word literally means, perhaps as a symbol at once of *life*, or living energy, and *freedom*, and with an immediate reference to the *creative word*, which is henceforth the breath of God in the world. Surely no candid mind can fail to feel the force of such a witness in the opening sentences of revelation to *the triune God*.

IV. TO US THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS IS LIGHT. The word of God "commands the light to shine out of darkness." "God *said*, Let there be light," or, Let light be. The going forth of *God's word* upon the universe very well represents the twofold fact, (1) that it is the *outcome* of his *will* and *nature;* and (2) that it is his *language*—the expression of *himself*. Hence all through this Mosaic cosmogony God is represented as speaking *to* creation, that we may understand that he speaks *in* creation, as he is also said to look at that which comes forth from himself to behold it, to approve it, to name it, to appoint its order and use. Such intimate blending of the *personal* with the *impersonal* is the teaching of Scripture as distinguished from all mere human wisdom. God is *in* creation and yet *above* it. Man is thus invited to seek the *personal presence* as that which is higher than nature, which his *own* personal life requires, that it may not be oppressed with nature's greatness, that it may

be light, and not darkness. There is darkness in *creation*, darkness in the deep waters of *the world's history*, darkness in the *human soul* itself, until God speaks and man hears. *Light* is not, physically, the first thing created; but it is the first *fact* of the *Divine days*—that is, the beginning of the *new order*. For what we have to do with is not the infinite secret of creation, but the *manifestation of the visible world*, "*God manifest.*" The first day in the history of the earth, *as man can read it*, must be the day when God removes the covering of darkness and says, "Let there be light." The *veil uplifted* is itself a *commencement*. *God said that it was good*. His own appointment confirmed the abiding distinction between light and darkness, between day and night; in other words, the unfolding, progressive interchange of work and rest, of revelation and concealment, the true beginning of the world's *week of labour*, which leads on to the everlasting *sabbath*. How appropriately this first day of the week of creation stands at the threshold of God's word of grace! The light which he makes to shine in our hearts, which divides our existence into the true order, the good and the evil separated from one another, which commences our life; and the Spirit is *the light of his own word*, the light which shines from the face of him who was "*the Word*," "*in the beginning with God*," "*without whom nothing was made that was made*."—R.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 3—5.—The evolution of the cosmos was accomplished by a series of Divine formative works which extended over a period of six successive days. In the character of those cosmic labours a progression is distinctly visible, though not continuous throughout. Unless, with Aristotle, the celestial luminaries are regarded as ζῶα λογικά, and so classed in the category of organised and living beings, it is impossible to find in their production an advance upon the preceding vegetation. Arbitrary transpositions of the days, as of the third and fourth, in order to make the first half of the creative week an inorganic, and the second half an organic, era, are inadmissible. The arrangement of the days that accords most exactly with the requirements of the case, and most successfully preserves the order and connection of the record, is that which divides them into two triads (Lange, Kalisch, Dana, &c.), as exhibited underneath :—

1. Light.	4. Lights.
2. { Air, Water.	5. { Fowl, Fish.
3. Dry Land and Plants.	6. Animals and Man,

—each triad beginning with the making of light, and ending with a double creation, and the works performed on the second having each a definite relation to the labours executed on the first. On the first creative day the formative energy of the Divine word, operating through the agency of the *Ruach Elohim*, eliminates the light from the dark chaotic mass of earth, on the second uplifts the atmosphere above the waters, and on the third distinguishes the dry land from the sea—at a later period in this same day clothing the dry land with vegetation, as if to prophesy some correspondingly higher advance in the creation work at the close of the second series. At this stage, instead of pressing forward with its operations, the demiurgic potency of the invisible Artificer appears to pause, and, reverting to the point from which it started, enters on its second course of labours. On the fourth day the light developed on the first is concentrated and permanently fixed in the celestial luminaries; on the fifth the air and waters, which were separated on the second, are filled with fowl and fish, their respective inhabitants; and on the sixth the dry land of the third day is occupied by animals, the mute prediction of the third day's vegetation being fulfilled by the creation of man.

Ver. 3.—*Day one.* **And God said.** This phrase, which is ten times repeated in the narrative of the six days' work, is commonly regarded as an instance of anthropomorphism, a peculiarity of revelation, and of this chapter in particular, at which rationalism affects to be offended. But any other mode of representing the Deity would have failed to convey to finite minds an intelligent idea of his nature. "Touching the Almighty, who can find him out?" The most that God himself could do in communicating to his creature

man a conception of his ineffable and unapproachable Godhead was to supply him with an anthropomorphic image of himself—"the Word made flesh." Deeper insight, however, into this sublime statement discerns that "anthropomorphism" does not exhaust its significance. God spoke; but to whom? "This was an omnipotent word," says Luther, "spoken in the Divine essence. No one heard this word uttered but God himself. . . . . . The Father spoke within." It is observable too that every time the word goes forth from Elohim it is followed by instantaneous movement in the chaos, as if the word itself were inherently creative. Remembering, then, that the doctrine of a personal Logos was not unknown to the later theology of the Old Testament (cf. Ps. xxxiii. 6; cxlviii. 5), and is clearly revealed in the New (John i. 1; Heb. xi. 3), it is difficult to resist the inference that here we have its roots, and that a correct exegesis should find in the creative word of Elohim an adumbration of the *Devar Jehovah* of the Hebrew Psalter, the *Logos* of John's Gospel, and the *Rema Theou* of the writer to the Hebrews. **Let there be light: and there was light.** The sublimity of these words, which arrested the attention of the heathen Longinus ('De Sublimitate,' ix.), and which Milton ('Paradise Lost,' vii.) and Du Bartas, an elder poet (*vid.* Kitto *in loco*), have tried to reproduce, is in great measure lost in our English version. Γενηθήτω φῶς καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς (LXX.) and *sit lux et fuit lux* (Vulg.) are superior translations of יְהִי־אוֹר וַיְהִי־אוֹר which might be rendered, "Light be, and light was." With reference to their import, the least satisfactory explanation, notwithstanding the eminent names that have lent it their support (Bush, Kitto, Murphy, Wordsworth), is that which understands the sun to have been created a perfectly finished luminous body from the first, though hitherto its light had been intercepted by the earth's vapours, which were now dispersed by Divine command. But the language of Elohim is too exalted to be applied to so familiar a phenomenon as the dissipation of terrestrial mists, and, besides, expressly negatives the hypothesis in question by affirming that the light was summoned into *being*, and not simply into *appearance*. The historian, too, explicitly asserts that the light was, *i. e.* began to be, and not merely to be visible. A modification of this view, viz., that the sun and moon were now created, but did not become visible until the fourth day (Inglis), must likewise be rejected, as according neither with ver. 1, which says that the heavenly bodies were created in the beginning, nor with vers. 16, 17, which declare that not until the fourth day were they constituted sources of light for the earth. The exigencies of the text, as well as the ascertained facts of physical science, require the first day's work to be the original production of light throughout the universe, and in particular throughout our planetary system (Kalisch, Lange, Delitzsch, Dawson). Calvin, though much more deeply concerned about the refutation of Servetus, who maintained that the Word only began to be with the creation of light, was able to perceive that this light was independent of the sun and moon; in this agreeing with Augustine, who, however, conjectured it to be not material, but spiritual in its nature ('De Genesi ad Literam,' lib. i. c. 3). Nor does it in the slightest conflict with ver. 1 to suppose that light was now for the first time produced, light being a *mode* or *condition* of matter, and not a distinct *element* or *substance*, as was at one time believed. Luminosity is simply the result of incandescence, although what specific change is effected on the constitutions or adjustments of the molecules of a body by the process of heating which renders it luminous science is unable to explain. Any solid body can be rendered incandescent by being heated up to between 700° and 800° Fahrenheit. Any liquid that can absorb as great a quantity of heat likewise emits light. Gases do not appear to be capable of incandescence, though the phenomena attending their sudden condensation discover light-producing properties in their composition. As to how the light of incandescent bodies is transmitted to the eye, the Pythagorean and Newtonian theory of small, impalpable particles of luminous matter being constantly emitted from their surfaces towards the eye may be said to have been successfully displaced by that of Descartes, Huygens, and Euler, which accounts for the phenomena of vision by the existence throughout space, and in the interstitial spaces of bodies, of an infinitely attenuated *ether*, which is thrown into undulations by luminous bodies precisely as the atmosphere is made to vibrate by bodies which are sonorous. But whichever theory be adopted to solve the mystery of its transmission, that of *emanation* or of *undulation*, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the creation of light, which formed the *opus operatum* of the first day, was in reality the evolution from the dark-robed, seething mass of our condensing planet (and probably from the other bodies in our solar system) of that luminous matter which supplies the light. It seems unnecessary to add that it could not have been either the subterranean fire which produced the igneous rocks of geology (Tayler) or caloric (Clarke); though, as *aor* is used in Scripture for heat (Isa. xliv. 16), fire (Isa. xxxi. 9; Ezek. v. 2), the sun (Job xxxi. 26), lightning (Job xxxvii. 3), and

there is every reason to believe that light, heat, and electricity are only modifications of the same force, we may be warranted in embracing all the three in its significance.

Ver. 4.—**And God saw the light, that it was good.** The anthropomorphism of this verse is suggestive, as teaching that from the first the absolute and all-sufficient Elohim was an intelligent Spectator of the operation of his own laws and forces, and was profoundly interested in the results which they achieved—an amount and degree of interference with the vast machine of nature which would satisfy any rational theist of today. God *saw*, i. e. examined and judged the newly-finished product, investigated its nature and its properties, contemplated its uses, admired its excellences, noted its correspondence with his own Divine idea; and in all these respects he pronounced it *good*. Afterwards it is the particular arrangement effected, or condition induced, by the creative word that evokes the Divine commendation; here it is the creature itself—"perhaps as the one object in nature which forms the fittest representation of the Creator himself, who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all (1 John i. 5), and of the true Light, which lighteth every man (John i. 9)" (Macdonald). **And God divided between the light and the darkness.** The celestial bodies not having been constituted "light-holders" for the earth until the fourth day forbids the supposition that the luminous matter, on being eliminated from the chaotic mass, was forthwith transported towards and concentrated in the sun. The sun itself, it is now well known, is "a solid mass of highly igneous matter engirt by a bed of dense clouds, on the top of which there lies, encircling all, a floating phosphorescent or luminous atmosphere, the lower part of it splendid, but the upper of lustre altogether dazzling, from which streams the flood of light that enlivens all surrounding spheres" (Nichol's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Sun). "If, therefore, with Laplace, we may assume that the physical history of the sun was the archetype of that of the various planetary bodies that compose our system, we must think of them also, in the process of condensation, developing luminous atmospheres, which would continue encircling them, and in fact making them suns, until, through their further condensation, those phosphorescent bands were broken up, and, becoming disengaged from their parent globes, were attracted towards, and subsequently centralised in, the photosphere of the sun. So far as our earth is concerned, that happened on the fourth day. On the first day the light would either ensphere it in a radiant cloud, or exist apart from it, like a sun, though always in the plane of its orbit" (Delitzsch). If the former, then manifestly, though revolving on its axis, the earth would not experience the vicissitude of day and night, which some conjecture was not at this time established; if the latter, then the same succession of light and darkness would be begun as was afterwards rendered permanent by the fourth day's work. The chief reasons for the latter alternative are the supposed necessity of understanding the term day as a period of twenty-four hours, and the apparent impossibility of explaining how the light could be divided from the darkness otherwise than by the diurnal revolution of the earth. The Hiphil of בָּדַל, however, means to disjoin what was previously mixed, and may simply refer to the separation of the luminous particles from the opaque mass. By that very act the light was divided from the darkness. It was henceforth to be no more commingled. "The light denotes all that is simply illuminating in its efficacy, all the luminous element; the darkness denotes all that is untransparent, dark, shadow-casting; both together denote the polarity of the created world as it exists between the light-formations and the night-formations—the constitution of the day and night" (Lange).

Ver. 5.—**And God called** (literally, called to) **the light Day, and** (literally, to) **the darkness he called Night.** "None but superficial thinkers," says Delitzsch, "can take offence at the idea of created things receiving names from God. The name of a thing is the expression of its nature. If the name be given by man, it fixes in a word the impression which it makes upon the human mind; but, when given by God, it expresses the reality, what the thing is in God's creation, and the place assigned it there by the side of other things" The things named were the light and the darkness; not the durations, but the phenomena. The names called were day, *yom*, and night, *layela*, which, again, were not time-measures, but character-descriptions. Ainsworth suggests that *yom* was intended to express "the tumult, stir, and business of the day," in all probability connecting it with *yam*, which depicts the foaming or the boiling of the sea; and that *layela*, in which he seems to detect the Latin *ululare*, is indicative of "the yelling or the howling of wild beasts at night." Gesenius derives the former from the unused root *yom*, which signifies to glow with heat, while the latter he associates with *lul*, also unused, to roll up, the idea being that the night wraps all things in obscurity. Macdonald sees in the naming of the creatures an expression of sovereignty and lordship, as when Adam named the beasts of the field. **And the evening and the morning were the first day.** Literally, *And evening was, and*

morning was, day one. Considerable diversity of sentiment prevails with regard to the exact interpretation of these words. On the one hand, it is assumed that the first creative period is here described as an ordinary astronomical or sidereal day of twenty-four hours' duration, its constituent parts being characterised in the usual way, as an evening and a morning. In the judgment of Kalisch and others the peculiar phrase, "Evening was, and morning was," is simply equivalent to the later Hebrew compound "evening-morning" (Dan. viii. 14), and the Greek νυχθήμερον (2 Cor. xi. 25), both of which denote a natural or civil day, though this is challenged, in the case of the Hebrew compound, by Macdonald. The language of the fourth commandment (Exod. xx. 11) is also appealed to as removing it beyond the sphere of doubt that the evening and the morning referred to are the component sections of an earthly day. As to the proper *terminus a quo* of this initial day, however, the advocates of this interpretation are at variance among themselves; Delitzsch taking the terms *ereb* (literally, "the setting," from *arab,* (1) to mix; (2) to set, to depart, like the sun) and *boker* (literally, "the breaking forth," from *bakar,* to cleave, to open) in an active sense, and applying the former to the first fading of the light, and the latter to the breaking of the dawn after the first interval of darkness has passed, thus reckoning the creative days from daybreak to daybreak; while Murphy and Kalisch, who agree with him in regarding the days as ordinary solar days, declare they must be reckoned, *Hebraico more,* from sunset to sunset. But if the first day commenced with an *evening* or obscure period (Has *ereb* no connection with *arab,* to mix? May it not describe the condition of things when light and darkness were commingled?), that can be discovered only in the chaotic *darkness* out of which the light sprang. Hence, on the other hand, as it seems improbable that this was of no more than twelve hours' duration, and as the presumption is that the light-period would be commensurate in length, it has been argued that day one was not a sun-measured day, but a period of indefinite extent. Of course the length of day one practically determines the length of all the six. If it was a solar day, then they must be considered such. But as the present sidereal arrangements for the measurement of time were not then established, it is clearly gratuitous to proceed on the assumption that it was. Hence, neither is it to be accepted without demonstration that they were not likewise periods of prolonged duration. It is obvious they were if it was; and that it was appears to be suggested by the terms in which it is described. This conclusion, that the creation days were long periods, and not simply solar days, is confirmed by a variety of considerations. 1. In the creation record itself (chs. i., ii. 4) the term is employed with an obvious latitude of meaning; standing for *light* as opposed to darkness (ver. 5); *day* as distinguished from night; and for a period of *twenty-four hours,* as in the phrase "for days and years" (ver. 14); and again for the whole creation period of six days, or, as is more probable, for the second and third days (ch. ii. 4). 2. General Scripture usage sanctions this interpretation of the word *day* as a period of indefinite duration; *e. g.* Zech. xiv. 6, 7, which speaks of the time of our Lord's coming, and indeed of the entire gospel dispensation, as יוֹם אֶחָד *unus dies,* i. e. a day together unique, the only day of its kind (Delitzsch); and characterises it as one of God's days, "known to the Lord," as if to distinguish it from one of man's ordinary civil days (cf. Deut. ix. 1; Ps. xc. 4; xcv. 8; Isa. xlix. 8; John ix. 4; Heb. xiii. 8; 2 Pet. iii. 8). 3. The works ascribed to the different days can with difficulty be compressed within the limits of a solar day. Taking the third day, *e. g.,* if the events assigned to it belong *exclusively* to the region of the supernatural, nothing need prevent the belief that twenty-four hours were sufficient for their accomplishment; but if the Divine *modus operandi* during the first half of the creative week was through "existing causes" (even vastly accelerated), as geology affirms that it was during the second half, and as we know that it has been ever since its termination, then a considerably larger space of time than twice twelve hours must have been consumed in their execution. And the same conclusion forces itself upon the judgment from a consideration of the works allotted to the sixth day, in which not only were the animals produced and Adam made, but the former, being collected in Eden, were passed in review before the latter to be named, after which he was cast into a sleep by Jehovah Elohim, a rib extracted from his side and fashioned into a woman, and the woman presented to him as a partner. 4. The duration of the seventh day of necessity determines the length of the other six. Without anticipating the exposition of ch. ii. 1—4 (*q. v.*), it may be said that God's sabbatic rest is understood by the best interpreters of Scripture to have continued from creation's close until the present hour; so that consistency demands the previous six days to be considered as not of short, but of indefinite, duration. 5. The language of the fourth commandment, when interpreted in accordance with the present theory, confirms the probability of its truth. If the six days in Exod. xx. 11 are simply natural days, then the seventh day, in which God is repre-

sented as having rested from his creative labours, must likewise be a natural or solar day; and if so, it is proper to observe what follows. It follows (1) that the events recorded in the first five verses of Genesis must be compressed into a single day of twenty-four hours, so that no gap will remain into which the short-day advocates may thrust the geologic ages, which is for them an imperative necessity; (2) that the world is only 144 hours older than man, which is contrary to both science and revelation; (3) that the statement is incorrect that God finished all his work at the close of the sixth day; and (4) that the fossiliferous remains which have been discovered in the earth's crust have either been deposited there since man's creation, or were created there at the first, both of which suppositions are untenable. But now, if, on the contrary, the language signifies that God laboured in the fashioning of his cosmos through six successive periods of indefinite duration (olamim, æons), and entered on the seventh day into a correspondingly long period of sabbatic rest, we can hold the opposite of every one of these conclusions, and find a convincing argument besides for the observance of the sabbath in the beautiful analogy which subsists between God's great week of olamim and man's little week of sun-measured days. 6. Geology declares that the earth must have been brought to its present condition through a series of labours extending over indefinitely long epochs; and, notwithstanding the confident assertion of Kalisch and others that it is hopeless to harmonise science and revelation, the correspondence between the contents of these geologic ages and those of the Mosaic days is so surprising as to induce the belief that the latter were, like the former, extended periods. First, according to geology, travelling backward, comes the Cainozoic era, with the remains of animals, but not of man; next is the Mezozoic era, with the remains of fish and fowl, but not of animals; and underneath that is the Palæozoic era, with its carboniferous formations, but still with traces of aquatic life at its beginning and its end. Now, whether the vegetation of the third day is to be sought for in the carboniferous formations of the Palæozoic age (Hugh Miller), or, as is more probable, in the age which saw the formation of the metamorphic rocks (Dawson), the order disclosed is precisely that which the Mosaic narrative affirms was observed—first plants, then fish and fowl, and finally animals and man; so that if the testimony of the rocks be admissible at all upon the subject, it is unmistakably in favour of the long-period day. 7. The opinion of neither Jewish nor Christian antiquity was entirely on the side of the natural-day theory. Josephus and Philo lent their sanction to the other view. Origen perceived the difficulty of having a first, second, and third day, each with an evening and a morning, without the sun, moon, and stars, and resolved it by saying that these celestial luminaries were appointed "οὔκετι εἴς ἀρχας τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς, ἀλλ' εἴς τὴν ἀρχην τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς νυκτός" ('Com. in Genesin,' i. 16). Augustine similarly writes, "Qui dies cujusmodi sint, aut perdifficile nobis, aut etiam impossibile est cogitare, quanto magis dicere.... Illorum autem priores tres sine sole peracti sunt, qui quarto die factus refertur" ('De Civitate Dei,' lib. xi. 6, 7). Bede likewise remarks, "Fortassis hic diei nomen totius temporis nomen est, et omnia volumina seculorum hoc vocabulo includit." 8. Heathen cosmogonies may also be appealed to as an indirect confirmation of the preceding evidence. Egyptian, Persian, Indian, and Etruscan legends represent the elaboration of the world as having been accomplished in a series of ages of prolonged duration. "God created in the first thousand years heaven and earth; in the second the vault of heaven; in the third the sea and the other waters of the earth; in the fourth the sun, moon, and stars; in the fifth the inhabitants of the air, of the water, and of the land; and in the sixth man," is the creation story of Etruria; and although in itself it has no validity, yet, as a traditional reflection of the Mosaic narrative it is not entirely destitute of weight.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 4.—*The value of light.* I. A DIVINE CREATURE. 1. *Mysteriously fashioned.* Philosophers can analyse light, unfold the seven prismatic hues that lie concealed in its pure bosom, theorise with much exactitude concerning its transmission, calculate its incredible velocity, elucidate the laws of its dispersion, utilise the wondrous potencies that are treasured up in its mystic beams; but they can neither make light nor explain its production. Notwithstanding all the restless activity of modern scientific discovery, Jehovah's two interrogations (Job xxxviii. 19, 24) remain unanswered "Where is the way where light dwelleth?" and, "By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?" 2. *Exquisitely*

beautiful. The first made of God's creatures, it is likewise one of the most radiantly fair. Streaming forth direct from the golden sun, or reflected in silver beams from the pale moon, painting the orient dawn with roseate hues, or bathing the western hills in a sea of glory, shimmering in whiteness through the summer air, or lying across the rain-cloud in its many-coloured bow, it fascinates the eye of every intelligent beholder with its incomparable splendour. 3. *Essentially immaculate.* "Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven, first born!" sings the immortal bard. "Bright effluence of bright essence," it could scarce be other than stainless in its purity. It is the one of all God's mundane creatures that has carried with it none of the chaotic darkness. Effectually divided from the darkness at the first, it now descends upon this lower earth from celestial realms. And being pure in itself, wherever it appears it communicates its own bright nature; it refines, beautifies, and purifies. 4. *Absolutely incorruptible.* As it brings no contamination in its beams, so it can receive none. The atmosphere may be polluted, the land may be defiled, the waters of the ocean may be rendered impure, it can in no degree be tainted. Excluded from our presence, admitted to the darkest and the foulest abodes, captivated and compelled to be our servant, absorbed by the dull sod, stored away in coal-fields—all these it may be, but not touched by earth's impurity.

II. A Divine gift. 1. A *universal* gift. It belongs to no one nation, country, class, or condition, being equally the heritage of all—the wise and the unwise, the unthankful and the grateful, the evil and the good (Matt. v. 45). It was God's first gift to the race. 2. A *free* gift. It costs nothing. The poorest beggar as well as the grandest monarch enjoys it on the same terms—"without money and without price." So free was it to the first man that it anticipated his arrival on the earth; and to this day the seeing eye is ever preceded by the light wherewith to see. And, like the light, all God's gifts are free. "He simply gives unto all men;" and, anticipative of man's wants, "he prevents us with his goodness." 3. A *useful* gift. Many of man's gifts are worthless; not so this of God's. Directly or indirectly, all the earth's glory is dependent on the light. Without light, neither would the loveliness of form be discerned, nor the beauty of colour exist. Light is indispensable for the production, preservation, and enjoyment of life. In almost every department of human industry its aid is sought. It is serviceable to the man of science, to the agriculturist, to the mechanic, to the sailor, to the traveller. "Upon whom does not his light arise?" inquires Bildad. We may ask, "Unto whom is not his light useful?" 4. A *silent* gift. It is ever gentle and noiseless in its coming; with incredible velocity rushing through the depths of space, yet with no appearance of hurry or confusion. Almost instantaneous in its swiftness, as if, having been the first to come in contact with the living word of the Creator, it had caught the Divine property of annihilating space. 5. A *welcome* gift. "Truly the light is sweet," &c. (Eccles. xi. 7). Welcome by all, it is specially so by them that "wait for the morning" (Ps. cxxx.).

III. A Divine emblem. 1. Of God (1 John i. 5), in respect of its glorious appearance, pure essence, diffusive character, quickening influence. 2. Of Christ (John ix. 3), as enlightening, healing, purifying, directing. 3. Of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 3), in respect of its celestial origin, mysterious nature, sudden and unexpected movements.

Light an emblem of the gospel. I. The appropriateness of the metaphor. Light and the gospel resemble one another in respect of—1. Their *source*—God. 2. Their *purity.* 3. Their *influence.* 4. Their *gentleness.*

II. God's will respecting light. 1. That the world should be filled with gospel light. 2. That every man should have the light. 3. That Christians should be the light.

Application.—1. Have you this light in your hearts, in your families, in your neighbourhoods? 2. Are you doing what you can to diffuse the light?

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 6.—*Day two.* The work of this day consisted in the formation of that immense gaseous ocean, called the atmosphere, by which the earth is encircled. **And God said, Let there be a firmament** (*rakiya*, an expanse, from *rakah*, to beat out; LXX., *στερέωμα*; Vulgate, *firmamentum*) **in the midst of the waters.** To affirm with Knobel, Gesenius, and others that the Hebrews supposed the atmospheric heavens to be a metallic substance (Exod. xxiv. 10), a vault fixed on the water-flood which surrounds the earth (Prov. viii. 27), firm as a molten looking-glass (Job xxxvii. 18), borne by the highest mountains, which are therefore called the pillars and foundations of heaven (2 Sam. xxii. 8), and having doors and windows (ch. vii. 11; xxviii. 17; Ps. lxxviii. 23), is to confound poetical metaphor with literal prose, optical and phenomenal language with strict scientific statement. The Vulgate and English translations of *rakiya* may convey the idea of solidity, though it is doubtful if *στερέωμα* (LXX.) does not signify that which *makes* firm as well as that which is *made* firm (McCaul, Wordsworth, W. Lewis), thus referring to the well-known scientific fact that the atmosphere by its weight upon the waters of the sea keeps them down, and by its pressure against our bodies keeps them up; but it is certain that not *solidity*, but *expansiveness*, is the idea represented by *rakiya* (cf. Scottish, *rax*, to stretch; Job xxxvii. 18; Ps. civ. 2; Isa. xl. 22).

"The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round."
(Milton, 'Par. Lost,' Bk. vii.)

And let it divide the waters from the waters. What these waters were, which were designed to be parted by the atmospheric firmament, is explained in the verse which follows.

Ver. 7.—**And God made the firmament.** How the present atmosphere was evolved from the chaotic mass of waters the Mosaic narrative does not reveal. The primary intention of that record being not to teach science, but to discover religious truth, the thing of paramount importance to be communicated was that the firmament was of God's construction. This, of course, does not prevent us from believing that the elimination of those gases (twenty-one parts of oxygen and seventy-nine of nitrogen, with a small proportion of carbonic acid gas and aqueous vapour) which compose our atmosphere was not effected by natural means; and how far it may have been assisted by the action of the light upon the condensing mass of the globe is a problem in the solution of which science may legitimately take an interest. **And divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament.** The *upper* waters are not the material of the stars (Delitzsch, Wordsworth), although Jupiter is of the same density as water, and Saturn only half its density; but the waters floating about in the higher spaces of the air. The *under* waters are not the lower atmospheric vapours, but the oceanic and terrestrial waters. How the waters are collected in the upper reaches of the atmosphere, Scripture, no less than science, explains to be by means of evaporation (Gen. ii. 6; Job xxxvi. 27; xxxvii. 16). These latter passages suggest that the clouds are balanced, suspended, upheld by the buoyancy of the air in exact accordance with scientific principles. **And it was so.** Six times these words occur in the creation record. Sublimely suggestive of the resistless energy of the Divine word, which speaks, and it is done, commands, and it standeth fast, they likewise remind us of the sweet submissiveness of the creature to the all-wise Creator's will, and, perhaps, are designed as well to intimate the fixed and permanent character of those arrangements to which they are attached.

Ver. 8.—**And God called the firmament heaven.** Literally, the heights, *shamayim*, as in ver. 1. "This," says Principal Dawson, "may be regarded as an intimation that no definite barrier separates our film of atmosphere from the boundless abyss of heaven without;" and how appropriate the designation "heights" is, as applied to the atmosphere, we are reminded by science, which informs us that, after rising to the height of forty-five miles above the earth, it becomes imperceptible, and loses itself in the universal ether with which it is surrounded. **And the evening and the morning were the second day.** For the literal rendering of this clause see on ver. 5. It is observable that in connection with the second day's work the usual formula, "And God saw that it was good," is omitted. The "*καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι καλόν*" of the Septuagint is unsupported by any ancient version. The conceit of the Rabbis, that an expression of the Divine approbation was omitted because on this day the angels fell, requires no refutation. Aben Ezra accounts for its omission by making the second day's work terminate with ver. 10. Lange asks, "Had the pro-

phetic author some anticipation that the blue vault was merely an appearance, whilst the savans of the Septuagint had no such anticipation, and therefore proceeded to doctor the passage?" The explanation of Calvin, Delitzsch, Macdonald, and Alford, though declared by Kalisch to be of no weight, is probably the correct one, that the work begun on the second day was not properly terminated till the middle of the third, at which place, accordingly, the expression of Divine approbation is introduced (see ver. 10).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 7.—*The atmospheric firmament.* I. THE CREATURE OF GOD. 1. From God it received its being (ver. 7). Not here alone, but in other parts, Scripture declares the firmament to be the Divine handiwork (Ps. xix. 1; civ. 2). Whence we may note—(1) That not *it, the creature,* should receive our worship, but *he, its Maker,* who is God over all, blessed for ever. (2) That since the firmament was made by God, *it must belong to him.* If at the present moment it is the special abode of the prince of the power of the air (Ephes. ii. 2), it must be a usurped dominion. The air with all its beams and showers, quite as much as the earth with all its trees and flowers, is God's property (Gen. xiv. 22; Ps. xxiv. 1, &c.). (3) That in all its movements *it only carries out the will of its Creator.* The air does nothing of itself. Under the reign of law as all created things are, the law that reigns is itself beneath the rule of God. The Hebrew mind never mistook things for persons, or creatures for the Creator (Ps. cxlviii. 8); it is only modern science that degrades the Creator from his throne, and puts the creature in his seat. 2. From God it received its function (ver. 6),—to divide between the upper and the lower waters,—which was—(1) *Simple,* i. e. in the sense of not being complex. Though its uses are manifold, they are all contained in this, that it floats up and sustains the vapours rising from the earth at a sufficient distance from the terrestrial waters. (2) *Necessary.* Without a clear body of atmospheric air between the waters, human life could not have existed. And equally without the watery clouds swimming in the atmosphere, both vegetable and animal life would perish. "Were the air absolutely dry, it would cause the water in plants to evaporate from their leaves more rapidly than it could be supplied to them by the soil and the roots. Thus they would speedily become flaccid, and the whole plant would droop, wither, and die." Similarly, "were the air which man draws into his lungs entirely free from watery fluid, he would soon breathe out the fluids which fill up his tissues, and would dry up into a withered and ghastly mummy" ('Chemistry of Common Life,' vol. i. p. 13). (3) *Beneficent.* Collecting the vapours of the earth in the form of clouds, it is thus enabled to throw them down again in the shape of rain, snow, or dew, according as it is required. 3. From God it received its name. (1) *Suitable.* "Heights," significant of the reality. (2) *Suggestive.* "The love, the power, the majesty of God, his thoughts, his ways, his purposes when compared with man's, are set forth to us by the height of the heaven above the earth."

II. THE SERVANT OF MAN. 1. *Indispensable.* Without the air man could not live. His physical being would perish without its oxygen. Without its pressure his bodily structure would fall to pieces. 2. *Valuable.* The uses of the atmosphere to man as a resident on earth are manifold. It supports animal and vegetable life around him. It conveys, refracts, and decomposes light. It transmits sound. It draws up noxious vapours from the soil, and disperses them by its winds. It assists him in a variety of his mechanical, chemical, commercial, and scientific enterprises. 3. *Willing.* Great as are its powers of service and its capacities of rebellion when excited with tempest, for the most part it is meek and docile, ever ready to acknowledge man as its master, and to execute his slightest wish. 4. *Unwearied.* Ever since it received its appointment from God to minister to the happiness of man it has unrestingly performed that task, and betrays no more signs of weariness to-day than it did at the first. 5. *Gratuitous.* It gives its services, as its great Creator gives his blessings, without money and without price.

Let us learn—1. To be thankful for the air we breathe. 2. To admire God's wisdom in the wonderful adjustments of the air. 3. To make the best use we can of that life which the air supports and subserves.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 9.—*Day three.* The distribution of land and water and the production of vegetation on this day engaged the formative energy of the word of Elohim. **And God said, Let the waters under heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.** To explain the second part of this phenomenon as a consequence of the first, the disclosure of the solid ground by the retirement of the waters from its surface, and not rather *vice versâ*, is to reverse the ordinary processes of nature. Modern analogy suggests that the breaking up of the hitherto universal ocean into seas, lakes, and rivers was effected by the upheaval of the land through the action of subterranean fires, or the subsidence of the earth's crust in consequence of the cooling and shrinking of the interior mass. Ps. civ. 7 hints at electric agency in connection with the elevation of the mountains and the sinking of the ocean beds. "At thy rebuke they (the waters) fled: at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away (were scattered). The mountains rose, the valleys sank (ἀναβαίνουσιν ὄρη καὶ καταβαίνουσι πεδία—LXX.; ascendunt montes, et descendunt campi—Jerome) to the place which thou hadst established for them" (Perowne). The gathering of the waters into one place implies no more than that they were, from this day forward, to be collected into one vast body, and restrained within bounds in a place by themselves, so as to admit of the exposure of the earth's soil. The "place founded for them" was, of course, the depths and hollows in the earth's crust, into which they were immediately withdrawn, not through direct supernatural agency, but by their own natural gravitation. The configuration of the dry land is not described; but there is reason to believe that the original distribution of land and water was the same, or nearly the same, as it is at present. Physical geographers have observed that the coast lines of the great continents and the mountain ranges generally run from north-east to south-west, and that these lines are in reality parts of great circles, tangent to the polar circle, and at right angles to a line drawn from the sun's centre to the moon's, when these bodies are either in conjunction or in opposition. These circles, it has further been remarked, are "the lines on which the thin crust of a cooling globe would be most likely to be ruptured by its internal tidal wave." Hence, though considerably modified by the mighty revolutions through which at successive periods the earth has passed, "these, with certain subordinate lines of fracture, have determined the forms of continents from the beginning" (Dawson, 'O. W.,' p. 184; cf. 'Green's Geology,' p. 512). **And it was so.** Though the separation of the dry land from the waters and the distribution of both were effected by Divine agency, nothing in the Mosaic narrative obliges us to think that these works were instantaneously completed. "There is truly no difficulty in supposing that the formation of the hills kept on through the succeeding creative days" (Lange). "Generally the works of the single creative days consist only in laying foundations; the birth process that is introduced in each extends its efficacy beyond it" (Delitzsch). "Not *how long*, but *how many times*, God created is the thing intended to be set forth" by the creative days (Hoffman). Scripture habitually represents the world in an aspect at once natural and supernatural, speaking of it as *natura* and *creatura*, φύσις and κτίσις (cf. Martensen's 'Dogmatics,' § 63); and although the latter is the view exhibited with greatest prominence, indeed exclusively, in the Mosaic cosmogony, yet the former is not thereby denied. Not immediateness, but certainty of execution, is implied in the "it was so" appended to the creative fiat.

Ver. 10.—**And God called the dry land Earth.** In opposition to the firmament, which was named "the heights" (*shamayim*), the dry land was styled "the flats," "Aretz" (cf. Sansc., *dhara;* Pehlev., *arta;* Latin, *terra;* Gothic, *airtha;* Scottish, *yird;* English, *earth;* vid. Gesenius). Originally applied to the dry ground as distinguished from the seas, as soon as it was understood that the solid earth was continuous beneath the water masses, by an easy extension of meaning it came to signify the whole surface of the globe. **And the gathering together of the waters called he Seas.** *Yamim*, from *yôm*, to boil or foam, is applied in Scripture to any large collection of water (cf. Gen. xiv. 3; Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iv. 49; Joel ii. 20). "The plural form *seas* shows that the *one place* consists of several basins" (Murphy). **And God saw that it was good.** The waters having been permanently withdrawn to the place founded for them by the upheaval of the great mountain ranges, and the elevation of the continental areas, the work thus accomplished is sealed by the Divine approval. The separation of the land and water was *good*, as a decided advance towards the completion of the *cosmos*, as the proper termination of the work commenced upon the previous day, as the production of two elements in themselves beautiful, and in separation useful as abodes of life, with which they were in due course

to be replenished. "To our view," says Dawson, "that primeval dry land would scarcely have seemed good. It was a world of bare, rocky peaks and verdureless valleys—here active volcanoes, with their heaps of scoriæ, and scarcely cooled lava currents—there vast mud-flats, recently upheaved from the bottom of the waters—nowhere even a blade of grass or a clinging lichen. Yet it was good in the view of its Maker, who could see it in relation to the uses for which he had made it, and as a fit preparatory step to the new wonders he was soon to introduce. . . . . ." Besides, "the first dry land may have presented crags, and peaks, and ravines, and volcanic cones in a more marvellous and perfect manner than any succeeding continents, even as the dry and barren moon now, in this respect, far surpasses the earth" ('O. W.,' p. 181).

Ver. 11.—**And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.** Three terms are employed to describe the vegetation here summoned into existence. Kalisch regards the first as a generic term, including the second and the third; but they are better understood as distinct classes:—(1) grass, *deshe*, first sprouts of the earth, tender herb, in which the seed is not noticed, as not being obvious to the eye; "tenera herba sine semine saltem conspicuo" (Rosenmüller); probably the various kinds of grasses that supply food for the lower animals (cf. Ps. xxiii. 2); (2) "the herb (*eseb*) yielding seed," the more mature herbage, in which the seed is the most striking characteristic; the larger description of plants and vegetables (cf. ch. ix. 3); and (3) "the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon (or above) the earth." The first clause describes its *specific nature*—"fruit-bearing;" the second, its *peculiar characteristic*—enclosing the seed in its fruit; the third, its *external appearance*—rising above the ground. "This division is simple and natural. It proceeds upon two concurrent marks, the structure and the seed. In the first the green blade is prominent; in the second, the stalk; in the third, the woody texture. In the first the seed is not conspicuous; in the second it is conspicuous; in the third it is enclosed in a fruit which is conspicuous" (Murphy). The phrase "after his kind," appended to the second and third, seems to indicate that the different species of plants were already fixed. The modern dogma of the origin of species by development would thus be declared to be *unbiblical*, as it has not yet been *proved* to be scientific. The utmost that can be claimed as established is that "species," *qua* species, have the power of variation along the line of certain characteristics belonging to themselves, but not that any absolutely new species has ever been developed with power indefinitely to multiply its kind.

Ver. 12.—**And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.** It is noticeable that the vegetation of the third day sprang from the soil in the same natural manner in which all subsequent vegetation has done, viz., by growth, which seems to resolve the well-known problem of whether the tree was before the seed, or the seed before the tree, in favour of the latter alternative, although in the order of nature the parent is always before the offspring. In all probability the seed forms were in the soil from the first, only waiting to be vitalised by the *Ruach Elohim*—The Spirit of God; or they may have been then created. Certainly they were not evolved from the dead matter of the dry land. Scripture, no more than science, is acquainted with Abiogenesis. Believing that "if it were given to her to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time," she might "witness the evolution of living protoplasm from not living matter," science yet honestly affirms "that she sees no reason for believing that the feat (of vitalising dead matter) has been performed yet" (Huxley's 'Brit. Association Address,' 1871); and Scripture is emphatic that, if it is protoplasm which makes organised beings, the power which manufactures protoplasm is the *Ruach Elohim*, acting in obedience to the *Divine Logos*. The time when the earth put forth its verdure, viz., towards the close of the third day, after light, air, earth, and water had been prepared and so adjusted as to minister to the life of plants, was a signal proof of the wisdom of the Creator and of the naturalness of his working.

Ver. 13.—**And the evening and the morning were the third day.** For exposition *vid.* ver. 5. Has modern geological research any trace of this third day's vegetation? The late Hugh Miller identified the long-continued epoch of profuse vegetation, since then unparalleled in rapidity and luxuriance, which deposited the coal-measures of the carboniferous system, with the latter half of this Mosaic day. Dana, Dawson, and others, rejecting this conclusion of the eminent geologist on the ground that the underlying Devonian, Silurian, and Cambrian systems yield abundant fossiliferous remains of aquatic life, infer that the third day's vegetation is to be sought for among the "unresolved schists" of the Azoic period. The metamorphic rocks, it is true, have not as yet yielded any absolutely certain traces of vegetable life; and, indeed, it is an open question

among geologists whether any of the earliest formed metamorphic rocks now remain (cf. Green's 'Geology,' p. 308); but still it is susceptible of almost perfect demonstration that plants preceded animals upon the earth. 1. Among the hypozoic strata of this early period limestone rocks and graphite have been discovered, both of these being of organic origin. 2. In the process of cooling the earth must have been fitted for vegetable life a long time before animals could have existed. 3. As the luxuriant vegetation of the coal period prepared the way for the subsequent introduction of animal life by ridding the atmosphere of carbonic acid, so by the presence of plants must the ocean have been fitted to be the abode of aquatic life. 4. Vegetation, being directly, or mediately, the food of animals, must have had a previous existence. On these grounds Professor Dana concludes that the latter part of the Azoic age of geology corresponds with the latter half of the third creative day. In the Creation Series of Chaldean tablets are two fragments, which George Smith conjectures have a reference to the first part of the third day's work. The one is—

1. When the foundation of the ground of rock (thou didst make)
2. The foundation of the ground thou didst call . . .
3. Thou didst beautify the heaven . . .
4. To the face of the heaven . . .
5. Thou didst give . . .

The other, which is much more mutilated and obscure, describes the god Sar (or Assur) as saying—

7. Above the sea which is the sea of . . .
8. In front of the *esara* (firmament) which I have made.
9. Below the place I strengthen it
10. Let there be made also *e-lu* (earth ?) for the dwelling of [man ?]

('Chaldean Genesis,' p. 68.)

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 9—12.—*Sea, land, and vegetation, contrasted and compared.* I. CONTRASTED, in respect of—1. Their *constitutions;*—sea being matter liquid and mobile, land matter solid and dry, vegetation matter organised and living. All God's creatures have their own peculiar natures and characteristic structures. Each one's nature is that which makes it what it is. A change of constitutional characteristics would be equivalent to an alteration of being. The nature and structure of each are assigned it by God. Whence may be gathered—(1) that if all creatures are not the same, it is because God has so willed it; (2) that God has so willed it, for this among other reasons, that he delights in variety; (3) that no separate creature can be other than its individual nature will allow; (4) that to wish to be different from what God has made us is to be guilty of a foolish as well as sinful discontent; and (5) that a creature's highest function is to act in accordance with its God-assigned nature. 2. Their *situations;* which were all different, yet all adapted to their respective natures and uses, and all wisely appointed. The waters were gathered into the earth's hollows, the lands raised above the ocean's surface, the plants spread upon the ground. It is the nature of water to seek the lowest levels; and, collected into ocean, lake, and river beds, it is of infinitely greater value than it would have been had it continued to overspread the globe. Similarly, submerged beneath the waters, neither could the *land* have been arrayed in verdure, or made a habitation for the beasts, much less a home for man; nor could the *plants* have grown without a dry soil to root in, while their beauty would have been concealed and their utility destroyed. And then each one has the place assigned it by God, out of which it cannot move, and against which it need not fret. The place founded for the waters has received them, and God has set a bound to them that they cannot pass. The dry land still maintains its elevation above the sea; and, as if in obedience to the Divine Creator's will, the waves are continually building up terraces and raised beaches in compensation for those they are taking down. Nor does it seem possible to shake off the vegetation from the soil. Scarcely has a square inch of ground been recovered from the waters, than it begins to deck itself in green. Let us learn here (1) that every creature of God, man included, has its own place; which is (2) best suited to its nature, functions, and uses on the earth; and (3) assigned it by God. Also, (4) that to vacate that place would be to run counter to God's ordinance and to God's wisdom, as well as to its own nature and usefulness; and (5) that it becomes every one to abide in that sphere of life in which he has been placed by God contentedly, cheerfully and diligently seeking to glorify

his Creator. 3. Their *operations;* which are as diversified as are their natures and places. The sea moves, the land rests, the plant grows. The sea fertilises and beautifies the soil, the soil sustains and nourishes the plant, the plant decorates the land and gives food to man and beast. The sea fills the clouds, the clouds fill the rivers and the streams, the rivers and the streams slake the thirst of the valleys, the valleys yield their substance to the corn and the wine and the oil, and these again deliver up their treasures to their master—man. The sea divides the land into continents, which, in turn, are broken up into countries by rivers; and thus nationalities are formed, and peace promoted by division. As the great highway of the nations, too, the sea helps to diffuse abroad the blessings of civilisation, and to teach men their interdependence. So, likewise, the land has its specific functions in the economy of nature, being assigned to support, sustain, enrich, instruct, and comfort man. And different from both are the uses of the plants. All which is fitted to suggest wisdom. (1) That each separate creature has its own separate work to do, for which it has been fitted with appropriate powers—a lesson of diligence. (2) That there are many different ways of serving God in this world—a lesson of charity. (3) That God does not wish all his creatures either to be or to serve alike—a lesson of contentment. (4) That the best way to serve God is to be ourselves and use the powers we possess, without condescending to imitate our neighbours—a lesson of individuality. (5) That though each separate creature has its own nature, place, and power, yet each is subservient to the other, and all to the whole—a lesson of co-operation.

II. COMPARED, in respect of — 1. Their *natures*, as being God's creatures. Land, sea, and vegetation all owe their existence to his Almighty fiat, and all equally proclaim themselves to be his handiwork. Hence they are all God's property—the earth with its fulness, the sea with its treasures, the plants with their virtues. Consequently man should (1) reverently worship him who made the sea and formed the dry land, and caused the grass to grow; (2) thankfully receive those highly serviceable creatures at God's hand; and, (3) remembering whose they are, and that himself is but a steward, faithfully employ them for their Creator's glory. 2. Their *characters*, as being obedient to the Divine word. "Gathered be the seas," said the word, and the seas were gathered. "Let the dry land appear," and it appeared. "Let the grass grow," and the grass grew. Let the land, sea, and plants be our teachers. Obedience the first duty of a creature. Nothing can compensate for its want (1 Sam. xv. 22). And this obedience must be prompt, complete, and continual, like that of sea, land, and vegetation. 3. *Their varieties*. The seas were divided into oceans, lakes, rivers; the land into mountains, hills, and valleys. the plants into grasses, herbs, and trees. God loves diversity in unity. As in a great house there are vessels of small quantity and vessels of large quantity (Isa. xxii. 24), so in the world are the creatures divided into more important and less. In society men are distributed into ranks and classes according to their greatness and ability; in the Church there are "babes" and there are "perfect men" in Christ; there are those possessed of many talents and much grace, and those whose endowments and acquirements are of smaller dimensions. 4. Their *qualities*, as being all good in their Creator's estimation. The highest excellence of a creature is to be approved by its Maker, not simply commended by its fellow-creature; to be good in the judgment of God, and not merely in the sight of men.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 14, 15.—*Day four*. With this day begins the second half of the creative week, whose works have a striking correspondence with the labours of the first. Having perfected the main structural arrangements of the globe by the elimination from primeval chaos of the four fundamental elements of light, air, water, and land, the formative energy of the Divine word reverts to its initial point of departure, and, in a second series of operations, carries each of these forward to completion—the light by permanently settling it in the sun, the air and water by filling them with fowl and fish, and the land by making animals and man. The first of these engaged the Divine Artificer's attention on the fourth creative day. **And God said, Let there be lights** (literally,

places where light is, light-holders, Ps. lxiv. 16; φωστῆρες, LXX.; *luminaria*, Vulgate; spoken of lamps and candlesticks, Exod. xxv. 6: Num. iv. 9, 16) **in the firmament** (literally, the expanse) **of the heaven.** יְהִי in the singular with מְאֹרֹת in the plural is explained by Gesenius on the ground that the predicate precedes the subject (*vid.* 'Gram.,' § 147). The scientific accuracy of the language here used to describe the celestial luminaries relieves the Mosaic cosmogony of at least one supposed irreconcilable contradiction, that of representing light as having an existence independent of the sun. Equally does it dispense exegesis from the necessity of accounting for what appears a threefold creation of the heavenly bodies—in the beginning (ver. 1), on the first day (ver. 3), and again on the fourth (ver. 14). The reference in the last of these verses is not to the original creation of the matter of the supramundane spheres (Gerlach), which was performed in the beginning, nor to the first production of light, which was the specific work of day one; but to the permanent appointment of the former to be the place, or centre of radiation, for the latter. The purpose for which this arrangement was designed, so far, at least, as the earth was concerned, was threefold:—1. **To divide the day from the night.** Literally, between the day and the night; or, as in ver. 18, to divide the light from the darkness, to continue and render permanent the separation and distinction which was effected on the first day. 2. **And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.** The celestial lights were to serve—(1) For *signs*. *Othôth*, from *oth*, anything engraved, hence a mark (Gen. iv. 15; 2 Kings xx. 8), is employed to designate a *portent*, or sign of warning or instruction (Ps. lxv. 8; Isa. viii. 18; xx. 3; LXX., σημεῖον; cf. Luke xxi. 25; Acts ii. 19), and here probably refers to the subsequent employment of the heavenly bodies "as marks or signs of important changes and occurrences in the kingdom of Providence" (Macdonald). "That they may have been designed also to subserve important purposes in the various economy of human life, as in affording signs to the mariner and husbandman, is not improbable, though this is not so strictly the import of the original" (Bush). Still less, of course, does the word refer to mediæval astrology or to modern meteorology. (2) For *seasons*. *Moradhim*, set times, from *ya'ad*, to indicate, define, fix, is used of yearly returning periods (Gen. xvii. 21; xviii. 14)—the time of the migration of birds (Jer. viii. 7), the time of festivals (Ps. civ. 19; Zech. viii. 19). (3) For *days* and *years*, i. e. for the calculation of time. Luther, Calvin, Mercer, Piscator, Delitzsch, Murphy, Macdonald, *et alii* regard the three phrases as co-ordinate; Rosenmüller, Gesenius, De Wette, Baumgarten take the first two as a *hendiadys* for "signs of the seasons;" Kalisch considers the second to be in opposition to the first; Tuch translates, "for signs, as well for the times as also for the days and years." The first, which accords with the English version, is the simplest, and, most probably, the correct interpretation. 3. **And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.** Not to introduce light for the first time to this lower world, but to serve as a new and permanent arrangement for the distribution of the light already called into existence. **And it was so.** Like every other fiat which Elohim issued, this was in due time followed by complete realisation.

Ver. 16.—**And God made two great lights.** Perhaps no part of the material universe more irresistibly demands a supreme Intelligence as its only proper origin and cause. "Elegantissima hæcce solis, planetarum et cometarum compages non nisi consilio et dominio entis intelligentis et potentis oriri potuit" (Newton, 'Principia,' lib. iii. sub fin. Ed. of Le Seur and Jacquier, vol. ii. p. 199). **The greater light to rule** (literally, to make like; hence to judge; then to rule. *Mashal;* cf. βασιλεύω—Gesenius) **the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.** The greater light is obviously the sun, which is sometimes denominated *chammah*, "the warm" (Ps. xix. 7; Isa. xxx. 26); sometimes *cheres*, "the glistering" (Job ix. 7); but usually *shemesh*, "the minister" (Deut. iv. 19; xxxiii. 14). Here it is described by its bulk or magnitude, which is larger than that of the moon, the second of the two luminaries, which is also spoken of as great relatively to the stars, which, though in reality immensely exceeding it in size, yet appear like little balls of light (*kokhavim*) bestudding the blue canopy of night, and are so depicted—the Biblical narrative being geocentric and phenomenal, not heliocentric or scientific. How the work of this day was effected does not fall within the writer's scope to declare, the precise object of revelation being to teach not astronomy, or any other merely human *gnosis*, but religion. Accepting, however, the guidance of physical astronomy, we may imagine that the cosmical light of day one, which had up to this point continued either encompassing our globe like a luminous atmosphere, or existing at a distance from it, but in the plane of the earth's orbit, was now, if in the first of these positions, gradually broken up, doubtless through the shrinking of the earth's mass and the consequent lessening of its power of attraction, and slowly drawn off towards, and finally concentrated, as a photosphere round the

sun, which was thereby constituted chief luminary or "light-holder" for the system, the moon and planets becoming, as a necessary consequence, "light-holders" in the secondary sense of "light-reflectors." It is interesting to note that some such explanation as this appears to have suggested itself to Willet, who wrote before the birth of Newton, and at a time when solar physics and spectrum analysis were things of the remote future. "It is not unlike," says he, "but that this light (of the first day), after the creation of the celestial bodies, might be drawn upward and have his reflection upon the beame of the sunne and of other starres." And again, "Whereas the light created the first day is called *ôr*, but the starres (meaning the heavenly bodies) are called *meôrôth*, as of the light, hence it may appear that these lightsome (*i. e.* luminous) bodies were made the receptacles of that light then created, which was now increased and united to these lights" ('Hexapla,' vers. 3, 14, London, 1632); an explanation which, though certainly hypothetical, must be regarded as much more in accordance with the requirements of the sacred text than that which discovers in the making of the lights only a further dissipation of terrestrial mists so as to admit not the light-bringing beams of the celestial bodies alone, but the forms of those shining orbs themselves (Speaker's 'Commentary'). **He made the stars also.** Though the stars are introduced solely because of their relation to the earth as dispensers of light, and no account is taken of their constitution as suns and planets, it is admissible to entertain the opinion that, in their case, as in that of the chief luminary of our tellurian heavens, the process of "sun" making reached its culmination on the fourth day. Perhaps the chief reason for their parenthetical introduction in this place was to guard against the notion that there were any luminaries which were not the work of Elohim, and in particular to prevent the Hebrews, for whom the work was written, from yielding to the heathen practices of star-gazing and star-worship. "The superstition of reading the destiny of man in the stars never took root among the Israelites; astrology is excluded by the first principle of Mosaism—the belief in one all-ruling God, who is subject to no necessity, no fate, no other will. Jeremiah warns the Hebrews not to be afraid of the 'signs of heaven,' before which the heathen tremble in vain terror (Jer. x. 2); and Isaiah speaks with taunting irony against the 'astrologers, star-gazers, and monthly prognosticators,' in whose counsel it is folly and wickedness to rely (Isa. xlvii. 13). But the Israelites had not moral strength enough to resist the example of star-worship in general; they could not keep aloof from an aberration which formed the very focus of the principal Eastern religions; they yielded to that tempting influence, and ignominious incense rose profusely in honour of the sun and the hosts of heaven—Jer. xix. 13; Ezek. viii. 16; Zeph. i. 5; Wisd. xiii. 2" (Kalisch).

Vers. 17, 18.—**And God set** (literally, gave) **them** (*i. e.* sun, moon, and stars) **in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.** An intimation that on this day the astronomical arrangements for the illumination of the globe and the measurement of time were permanently settled. **And God saw that it was good.** Laplace was inclined to question the Divine verdict with regard at least to the moon, which he thought might have been so placed as to be always full, whereas, at its present distance from the earth, we are sometimes deprived of both its light and the sun's together. But not to dwell upon the fact that to remove the moon four times its present distance from the earth, which it would require to be in order to be always full, would necessitate important changes in the other members of the solar system which might not be for the earth's advantage, the immediate effect of such a disposition of the lunar orb would be to give us a moon of only one sixteenth the size of that which now dispenses its silver beams upon our darkened globe (Job xi. 12).

Ver. 19.—**And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.** The Scripture references to this day's work are both numerous and instructive (cf. Job ix. 9; xxxvii. 31; Ps. viii.; xix.; civ.; cxlvii.). The Hebrew writers supply no information as to the astronomical theories which were prevalent in their time; yet "from other sources we have facts leading to the belief that even in the time of Moses there was not a little practical astronomy in the East, and some good theory. The Chaldeans at a very early period had ascertained the principal circles of the sphere, the position of the poles, and the nature of the apparent motions of the heavens as the results of revolution on an inclined axis. The Egyptian astronomers, whom we know through Thales, 640 B.C., taught the true nature of the moon's light, the sphericity of the earth, and the position of its five zones. Pythagoras, 580 B.C., knew, in addition, the obliquity of the ecliptic, the identity of the evening and morning star, and the earth's revolution round the sun" (Dawson, 'O. W.,' p. 207). Modern astronomy, though possessed of highly probable theories as to the formation of the universe, is still unable to speak with absolute precision with regard to this fourth day's work. Yet there

are not wanting indirect corroborations of the truth of the Mosaic narrative from both it and geology. According to the sacred writer, the presently existing atmosphere, the distribution of land and water, the succession of day and night, and the regular alternation of the seasons, were established prior to the introduction of animal life upon the earth; and Sir Charles Lyell has demonstrated nothing more successfully than the dominion of "existing causes" from the Eozoic era downwards, and the sufficiency of these causes to account for all the changes which have taken place in the earth's crust. Again, geology attests the prevalence on our globe in prehistoric times of a much more uniform and high temperature than it now possesses, so late as the Miocene era a genial tropical climate having extended up beyond the Arctic circle, and in the earliest eras of the history of the globe, in all probability, the entire sphere being so favoured with excessive heat. Different causes have been suggested for this phenomenon; as, *e. g.*, the greater heat of the cooling globe (the earliest geologists), a different distribution of land and water (Lyell), variations in the eccentricity of the earth's orbit (Herschell and Croll), changes in the earth's axis (Evans, Drayson, Bell), and the greater intensity of the sun's heat (Sir W. Thomson, 'Trans. Geolog. Soc.,' Glasgow, 1877). The Biblical narrative, by distinctly teaching that the sun was perfected on the fourth day, renders it intelligible that his influence on the surface of the earth was then at its greatest, causing tropical climates to prevail and tropical vegetation to abound, both of which have gradually disappeared from the polar regions in consequence of the sun's diminished heat. It remains only to note that the Chaldean Genesis preserves a striking reminiscence of this day's work; the obverse of the fifth creation tablet reading—

1. It was delightful, all that was fixed by the great gods.
2. Stars, their appearance (in figures) of animals he arranged.
3. To fix the year through the observation of their constellations.
4. Twelve months (or signs) of stars in three rows he arranged.
5. From the day when the year commences unto the close.
6. He marked the positions of the wandering stars (planets) to shine in their courses.

. . . .

12. The god Uru (the moon) he caused to rise out, the night he overshadowed,
13. To fix it also for the light of the night, until the shining of the day.

. . . .

19. When the god Shamas (the sun) in the horizon of heaven in the east.
20. . . . formed beautifully and . .
21. . . to the orbit Shamas was perfected.

"It appears that the Chaldean record contains the review and expression of satisfaction at the head of each tablet, while the Hebrew has it at the close of each act" ('Chaldean Genesis,' pp. 69—73).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 16.—*The celestial luminaries.* I. Display the DIVINE WISDOM. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. xix. 1). M. Comte believed they declared no other glory than that of Hipparchus, Kepler, Newton, and their successors. Newton agreed with the Hebrew poet (*vid.* Expos. on ver. 16). The astronomical argument in behalf of theism has always been impressive, if not absolutely conclusive. Certainly, granting the Divine existence, nowhere does God's glory shine out more conspicuously; and perhaps the attribute which most imperiously arrests attention is that of *wisdom*. This would seem to be the aspect of the Divine glory which a contemplation of the midnight heavens discovered to the writer of Ps. civ. (*vid.* ver. 24, which is introduced after a poetic version of the fourth day's work) and of Ps. cxxxvi. (*vid.* ver. 7 in the same connection; cf. Prov. iii. 19; viii. 27; Jer. li. 15). Many things about the orbs of heaven evince their Creator's wisdom: these specially—1. Their *formation*, as explained by the highly credible teachings of physical astronomy. 2. Their *varieties*—consisting of sun, moon, planets, comets, nebulæ. 3. Their *motions:* in elliptical and parabolic orbits. 4. Their *dispositions:* the suns, moons, and planets in systems; the stars in constellations, clusters, galaxies.

II. Attest the DIVINE GOODNESS. Displayed chiefly by the threefold purpose the celestial orbs were designed to serve:—1. *To give light upon the earth.* Even the *stars* could scarcely be dispensed with without a sense of loss. Feeble as their light is, owing to their immense distance from the earth, they are yet invaluable to voyagers and travellers (Acts xxvii. 20). Still less could the *moon's* light, so pale and silvery in its whiteness, be spared. The night without its chaste beams would

be shrouded in thick gloom, while with them an air of cheerfulness is imparted to the darkened earth. And, of course, least of all could the *sun* be wanted (for 'The Value of Light' *vid.* p. 13). 2. *To distinguish day and night.* The beneficence of this arrangement appears by reflecting on the inconvenience of either of the other two alternatives, perpetual day and perpetual night. The disadvantages of the latter have been indicated; those of the former are scarcely less numerous. The alternation of darkness—(1) Introduces variety in nature, which is always pleasing. Continuous day would be in danger of becoming monotonous, at least in this mundane world, if not in the celestial (Isa. lx. 20; Rev. xxii. 5). (2) Meets the necessities of creature life, by supplying constantly-recurring periods of repose, which are eminently beneficial for the growth of plants, animals, and man. "Vegetable sleep is that relaxation of the vital processes which is indicated by the folding together and drooping of the leaves as night approaches" (Leo Grindon, 'Life: its Nature,' &c., p. 306). The animal tribes generally, with the exception of the wild beasts (Ps. civ. 20), seek repose with the shades of evening. And man, without the recuperative slumber which darkness brings, would speedily exhaust his energies. (3) Solemnises the mind of man, by suggesting thoughts of his frailty, of his end in the sleep of death, but also of his resurrection to the light of a better morning. 3. *To mark times and seasons.* That the different seasons of the year are somehow connected with the celestial bodies is perhaps all that the Mosaic narrative can be made to teach. But we know them to be dependent on the earth's revolution round the sun. And the fact that God has so arranged the earth's relation to the sun as to produce these seasons is a signal proof of the Divine goodness. Another is that God has so fixed and determined their movements as to enable man to measure time by their means. Without the help of sun, moon, and stars chronology would be impossible.

III. Proclaim the DIVINE POWER. More than any other science, astronomy enables us to realise the physical omnipotence of the Deity. Imagination becomes bewildered by the effort to represent the quantity of force required to propel a globe like our earth through the depths of space at the immense velocity of 65,000 miles an hour. What, then, must be the strength of that arm which, in addition, hurls Jupiter, equal in weight to 1400 earths, along his orbit with a velocity of 29,000 miles an hour? And not Jupiter alone, but suns immensely greater, at rates of motion that transcend conception. Well said Job (ch. xxvi. 14). Yet, perhaps, the Divine power is as much evinced by the *perpetuation* of these celestial masses and movements as by their first production. Not only has God made the sidereal firmament, with its stupendous globes and amazing velocities, but he has so established them that since the beginning they have kept on their mystic paths without rebellion and without confusion (Ps. cxlvii. 5).

IV. Reflect the DIVINE BEAUTY. Perhaps glory is the better word. The counterpart of glory in the Creator is beauty in the creature. The celestial luminaries were approved as good, doubtless, for their uses, but likewise for themselves, as being of incomparable splendour. "God hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Eccles. iii. 11). Nothing that God does make can be otherwise than beautiful; and by their splendour, their order, their unity, they seem to mirror forth the majesty, and purity, and oneness of him to whom they owe their being.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 14—19.—*The fourth day.* Notice—

I. GOD PREPARES HEAVEN AND EARTH FOR MAN. Light needed for the vegetable world. But when the higher life is introduced, then there is an order which implies intelligence and active rational existence. The signs are for those that can observe the signs. The seasons, days, and years for the being who consciously divides his life.

II. THE LUMINARIES ARE SAID TO RULE THE DAY AND NIGHT. The concentration of light is the appointed method of its diffusion, and adaptation to the purposes of man's existence. So in the moral world and in the spiritual world. There must be rule, system, diversities of gifts, diversities of operations. Distinctions of glory—of the sun, moon, stars. As the *light*, so is the *rule.* Those possessed of much power

to enlighten others ought to be rulers by their Divinely-appointed place and work. But all the light which flows from heavenly bodies has first been communicated to them. We give out to others what we receive.

III. This setting out of time reminds us that THE EARTHLY EXISTENCE IS NOT SUPREME, but ruled over until it is itself lifted up into the higher state where day and night and diurnal changes are no more. The life of man is governed here largely by the order of the material universe. But as he grows into the true child of God he rises to a dominion over sun, moon, and stars. 1. *Intellectual.* By becoming master of many of the secrets of nature. 2. *Moral.* The consciousness of fellowship with God is a sense of moral superiority to material things. The sanctified will and affections have a sphere of rule wider than the physical universe, outlasting the perishable earth and sky. 3. *Spiritual.* Man is earthly first, and then heavenly. Human nature is developed under the rule of sun, moon, and stars. In the world where there shall be no more night the consciousness of man will be that of a spirit, not unwitting of the material, but ruling it with angelic freedom and power.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 20.—*Day five.* The waters and the air, separated on the second day, are on this filled with their respective inhabitants. **And God said.** Nature never makes an onward movement, in the sense of an absolutely new departure, unless under the impulse of the word of Elohim. These words distinctly claim that the creatures of the sea and of the air, even if evolved from material elements, were produced in obedience to Divine command, and not spontaneously generated by the *potentia vitæ* of either land, sea, or sky. **Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature.** Literally, swarm with swarmers, or crawl with crawlers. The fundamental signification of *sharatz* is to creep or swarm, and hence to multiply (Gesenius); or, *vice versâ*, to multiply in masses, and hence to swarm or abound (Fürst; cf. ch. viii. 17; Exod. i. 7; viii. 3). The *sheretzim*, though including small aquatic creatures that have short or no legs, are obviously "all kinds of living creatures inhabiting either land or water which are oviparous and remarkable for fecundity" (Bush). We may, therefore, understand the creative fiat of the fifth day as summoning first into existence the insect creation (in Lev. xi. 20—23 defined as *flying sheretzim*), the fishes of the sea (*sheretzim* of the waters, Lev. xi. 9, 10), and the reptiles and saurians of sea and land (*sheretzim* of the land, Lev. xi. 41, 42). Dawson concludes that "the prolific animals of the fifth day's creation belonged to the three Cuvierian sub-kingdoms of the radiata articulata, mollusca, and to the classes of fish and reptiles among the vertebrata. **That hath life.** *Nephesh chayyah;* literally, a living breath. Here the creatures of the sea are distinguished from all previous creations, and in particular from vegetation, as being possessed of a vital principle. This does not, of course, contradict the well-known truth that plants are living organisms. Only the life principle of the animal creation is different from that of the vegetable kingdom. It may be impossible by the most acute microscopic analysis to differentiate the protoplasmic cell of vegetable matter from that of animal organisms, and plants may appear to be possessed of functions that resemble those of animals, yet the two are generically different—vegetable protoplasm never weaving animal texture, and plant fibre never issuing from the loom of animal protoplasm. That which constitutes an animal is the possession of respiratory organs, to which, doubtless, there is a reference in the term *nephesh*, from *naphash*, to breathe. **And fowl that may fly.** Literally, let "winged creatures" fly. The fowls include all tribes covered with feathers that can raise themselves into the air. The English version produces the impression that they were made from the waters, which is contrary to ch. ii. 19. The correct rendering disposes of the difficulty. **Above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.** Not above the firmament like the clouds (Von Bohlen, Baumgarten), but in the concave vault (Tuch, Delitzsch), or before the surface of the expanse (Kalisch).

Ver. 21.—**And God created** (*bara*, as in ver. 1, to indicate the introduction of an absolutely new thing, viz., the principle of animal life) **great whales.** *Tanninim*, from *tanan;* Greek, τείνω; Latin, *tendo;* Sansc., *tan*, to stretch. These were the first of the two classes into which the *sheretzim* of the previous verse were divided. The word is used of serpents (Exod. vii. 9; Deut. xxxii. 33; Ps. xci. 13; Jer. li. 34), of the crocodile (Ezek. xxix. 3; xxxii. 2), and may therefore here describe "great sea monsters" in general: τὰ κήτη τὰ μεγάλα (LXX.); "monstrous crawlers that wriggle through the water or scud along the banks" (Murphy); whales,

crocodiles, and other sea monsters (Delitzsch); gigantic aquatic and amphibious reptiles (Kalisch, Macdonald). **And every living creature** (*nephesh chayyah*) **which moveth.** Literally, the moving, from *ramas*, to move or creep. This is the second class of *sheretzim*. The term *remes* is specially descriptive of creeping animals (ch. ix. 2), either on land (ch. vii. 14) or in water (Ps. lxix. 35), though here it clearly signifies aquatic tribes. **Which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind.** The generic terms are thus seen to include many distinct orders and species, created each after its kind. **And every winged fowl after his kind.** Why fowls and fish were created on the same day is not to be explained by any supposed similarity between the air and the water (Luther, Lyra, Calvin, &c.), or any fancied resemblance between the bodily organisms of birds and fishes, but by the circumstance that the firmament and the waters were separated on the second day, to which it was designed that this day should have a correspondence. **And God saw that it was good.** As in every other instance, the productions of this day approve themselves to the Divine Creator's judgment; but on this day he marks his complacency by a step which he takes for the first time, viz., that of pronouncing a benediction on the newly-created tribes. Nothing could more evince the importance which, in the Creator's judgment, attached to this day's work.

Ver. 22.—**And God blessed them.** To bless is to wish well to (ch. xxvii. 4; Num. vi. 23). In the case of God blessing inanimate things, it signifies to make them to prosper and be abundant (Exod. xxiii. 25; Job i. 10; Ps. lxv. 11). The nature of the blessing pronounced upon the animal creation had reference to their propagation and increase. **Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.** The paronomastic combination, *be fruitful and multiply*, became a regular formula of blessing (cf. ch. xxiv. 60; xxxv. 11; xlviii. 4; Ps. cxxviii. 3, 4). The Divine benediction was not simply a wish; but, adds Calvin, "by the bare intimation of his purpose he effects what men seek by entreaty." Nor was it meaningless that the words of benediction were addressed to the creatures; it was designed to teach that the "force of the Divine word was not meant to be transient, but, being infused into their natures, to take root and constantly bear fruit" (Calvin).

Ver. 23.—**And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.** If of the previous creative days geological science has only doubtful traces, of this it bears irrefragable witness. When the first animal life was introduced upon our globe may be said to be as yet *sub judice*. Principal Dawson inclines to claim for the gigantic foraminifer, *eozoon canadense*, of the Laurentian rocks, the honour of being one of the first aquatic creatures that swarmed in terrestrial waters, though Professor Huxley believes that the earliest life is not represented by the oldest known fossils ('Critiques and Addresses,' ix. 1873); but, whether then or at some point of time anterior introduced, geology can trace it upwards through the Palæozoic and Mezozoic eras with the result that is here so exactly defined. Throughout the long ages that fill the interval between the Azoic period of our earth's history and that which witnessed the appearance of the higher animals she is able to detect an unbroken succession of aquatic life, rising gradually from lower to higher forms—from the trilobites and molluscs of the Cambrian and Silurian systems, up through the ganoid fishes of the Devonian and the amphibians of the Carboniferous to the saurian reptiles of the Permian periods. At this point certain ornithic tracks in the superincumbent Triassic strata reveal the introduction upon the scene of winged creatures, and with this accession to its strength and volume the stream of life flows on till the higher animals appear. Thus geology confirms the Scripture record by attesting (1) the priority of marine animals and birds to land animals; (2) the existence of a period when the great sea monsters, with the smaller aquatic tribes and winged fowls of the air, were the sole living creatures on the globe; and (3) that, precisely as Elohim designed life has continued in unbroken succession since the time of its first introduction. It may also be noted that the Palæontological history of the earth's crust suggests a number of considerations that enable us to form a conception of the fifth day's work, which, though not contravened by the Mosaic narrative, is yet by it not explicitly disclosed. For example, whereas it might seem to be the teaching of the inspired writer that the *tanninim*, the *remes*, and the *birds* were created simultaneously, and so were synchronous in their appearance, the testimony of the rocks rather points to a series of creative acts in which successive species of living creatures were summoned into being, as the necessary conditions of existence were prepared for their reception, and indeed with emphasis asserts that the order of creation was not, as in ver. 21, first the great sea monsters, and then the creepers, and then the birds; but first the smaller aquatic tribes, and then the monsters of the deep, and finally the winged creatures of the air. This, however, is not to contradict, but to elucidate, the word of God.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 20—22.—*The mystery of life.* I. Its origin. 1. *Not dead matter.* Scripture, equally with science, represents life as having a physical basis; but, unlike modern evolutionists, never confounds vital force with the material mechanism in which it resides, and through which it operates. Advanced biologists account for life by molecular arrangement, chemical combination, spontaneous generation, or some such equally insufficient hypothesis. The rigorous necessities of truth and logic, however, compel them to admit that neither the action of material forces nor the ingenuity of man has been able to produce a bioplasmic cell. "The chasm between the not living and the living the present state of knowledge cannot bridge" (Huxley). "Most naturalists of our time have given up the attempt to account for the origin of life by natural causes" (Häeckel). But—2. *The living God.* All existing life has proceeded from some antecedent life, is the latest verdict of biological science. Every bioplast has been produced by a previous bioplast: *omnis cellula e cellula.* Essentially that is the teaching of revelation. The Maker of the first bioplast was God. If the present narrative appears to recognise the doctrine of mediate creation by saying, "Let the waters bring forth," "Let the earth bring forth," it is careful to affirm that, in so far as material forces contributed to the production of life, they were directly impelled thereto, and energized therefor, by the creative word. The hypothesis that matter was originally possessed of, or endowed with, "the potency of life" (Tyndall) is expressly negatived by ver. 21, which represents life as the immediate creation of Elohim.

II. Its nature. Scripture vouchsafes no information as to what constitutes the *vis viva* of organised beings. Beyond characterising the beings themselves as "living creatures," it leaves the subject wrapped in profoundest mystery. And the veil of that mystery science has not been able to penetrate. The microscope has indeed conclusively shown that living matter, or bioplasm, is that which weaves the endlessly varied structures of animal forms; but as to what that is which imparts to the transparent, structureless, albuminous fluid, called bioplasm, the power of self-multiplication and organisation it is silent. "We fail to detect any organisation in the bioplasmic mass, but there are movements in it and life" (Huxley). The utmost that science can give as its definition of life is, "that which originates and directs the movements of bioplasm" (cf. 'Beale on Protoplasm;' Cook's 'Lectures on Biology'). Scripture advances a step beyond science, and affirms that life in its last analysis is the power of God (Ps. civ. 30; Isa. xxxviii. 16).

III. Its manifestation. 1. *Abundant.* The creatures of the sea were produced in swarms, and probably the birds appeared in flocks. This was—(1) Predictive of their natures as gregarious animals. Though afterwards prolific, they might have been created in small numbers; but, as if to maintain a correspondence between the characteristic properties of the creatures and their first production, they were made, the fish in shoals, the fowl in broods. (2) Expressive of the Creator's joy. God finds a part of His happiness in surrounding himself with living creatures. Had there been no other end to serve by the fish and fowl of the fifth day, this would have been cause sufficient for their creation. (3) Anticipative of man's arrival on the scene. Not only was it a step in advance on the work of the previous day, and as such preliminary to the advent of man, but the aquatic and aerial creatures were designed to be subservient to man's needs and uses. 2. *Varied.* (1) In its form. The living creatures of the fifth day were diverse in their physical structures. Though in the initial stages of their embryonic condition fish and fowl may not be widely dissimilar, yet their completed organisms are not the same. Each class, too, consists of an endlessly diversified array of species, and the variations among individual members of the same species are practically limitless. (2) In its functions. Although all living creatures have certain essential characteristics in common, resembling one another in their chemical constituents, in their living by respiration, in their growth by intersusception of nutriment, in their capability of reproduction, yet the ordinary functions they are meant to perform through their respective organs

are different in different kinds of animals. The fowls, *e. g.*, were designed to fly through the atmosphere; the fish to swim in water. (3) In its sphere. The different living creatures are differently located,—the fish in the sea, the birds in the air,—each one's sphere being adapted to its nature. 3. *Progressive.* Science, no less than Scripture, attests that in the introduction of life to our globe there has been a regular and continuous gradation from lower to higher forms of organisation, and has ventured to propose, as its solution of the problem of vital progression, external conditions, embryonic phases, use and disuse of organs, natural selection, &c. These theories, however, are declared by competent authorities to be insufficient (*vid.* Page's 'Philosophy of Geology,' p. 108). The solution of Scripture —*special creation*—has at least the merit of being sufficient, and has not yet been disproved or displaced by modern research.

IV. ITS EXCELLENCE. God saw that it was good—1. As *the handiwork of God.* Nothing that God makes can be otherwise than beautiful and good (Eccles. iii. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 4). 2. As *an ornament to nature.* Without the vegetation of the third day the world would present an extremely uninteresting and uninviting appearance. Much more would it be devoid of attraction and cheerfulness if the myriads of sentient beings with which it is peopled were absent. 3. As *the servant of man.* From the first it was prepared with the express intention of being subjected to man's dominion, and doubtless the Creator's approbation had regard to this beneficent design.

V. ITS PERPETUATION. "Of the causes which have led to the origination of living matter," says Huxley, "we know absolutely nothing; but, postulating the existence of living matter endowed with that power of hereditary transmission and with that tendency to vary which is found in all matter, Mr. Darwin has shown good reason for believing that the interaction between living matter and surrounding conditions, which results in the survival of the fittest, is sufficient to account for the gradual evolution of plants and animals from their simplest to their most complex forms" ('Ency. Brit.,' art. Biology). Moses accounts for the origination of living creatures by a Divine creation, and for their continuance by the Divine benediction which made it the law of their being to propagate their kind and to multiply in masses. The remarkable fecundity which by the blessing of Elohim was conferred upon both fish and fowl is graphically portrayed by Milton ('Par. Lost,' vii. 387). That from neither the aquatic nor aerial creatures has this power of kind-multiplication departed naturalists attest. "All organised beings have enormous powers of multiplication. Even man, who increases slower than all other animals, could, under the most favourable circumstances, double his numbers every fifteen years, or a hundred-fold in a century. Many animals and plants could increase their numbers from ten to a thousand-fold every year" (Wallace 'on Natural Selection,' p. 265).

Lessons:—1. Adore him who is the Author and Preserver of all life in the creatures. 2. Respect the mystery of life; and what we cannot give let us be careful not to destroy. 3. Appreciate the value of the living creatures.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 20—23.—*The fifth day.* I. LIFE UNDER THE BLESSING OF GOD. 1. *Abundance.* Swarming waters, swarming air, preparing for the swarming earth. "Be fruitful, and multiply." The absence of all restraint because as yet the absence of sin. God's law is liberty. The law of life is the primary law. If there be in man's world a contradiction between the multiplication of life and the happiness of life, it is a sign of departure from the original order. 2. *Growth,* improvement, advancement towards perfection. The fish, fowl, beast, man exist in a scheme of things; the type of animal life is carried up higher. The multiplication is not for its own sake, but for the future. Generations pass away, yet there is an abiding blessing. Death is not real, though seeming, destruction. There is a higher nature which is being matured. 3. *Service of the lower for the higher.* God blesses the animal races for the sake of man, the interpreter of creation, the voice of its praise. He blesses the lower part of human life for the sake of the soul.

II. LIFE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. The immense productiveness of

nature would become a curse, not a blessing, unless restrained by its own laws. The swarming seas and air represent at once unbounded activity and universal control by mutual dependence and interaction. So in the moral world. It is not life, existence, alone that betokens the blessing of God, but the disposition of life to fulfil its highest end. We should not desire abundance without the grace which orders its use and controls its enjoyment.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 24.—*Day six.* Like day three, this is distinguished by a double creative act, the production of the higher or land animals and the creation of man, of the latter of which it is perhaps permissible to see a mute prediction in the vegetation which closed the first half of the creative week. **And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind.** In these words the land animals are generically characterised as *nephesh chayyah*, or animated beings; in the terms which follow they are subdivided into three well-defined species or classes. **Cattle.** *Behemah;* literally, the dumb animal, *i. e.* the larger grass-eating quadrupeds. **And creeping thing.** *Remes;* the moving animal, *i. e.* the smaller animals that move either without feet or with feet that are scarcely perceptible, such as worms, insects, reptiles. Here it is land-creepers that are meant, the *remes* of the sea having been created on the previous day. **And beast of the earth** (*chayyah* of the earth) **after his kind.** *I. e.* wild, roving, carnivorous beasts of the forest. In these three comprehensive orders was the earth commanded to produce its occupants; which, however, no more implied that the animals were to be developed from the soil than were the finny tribes generated by the sea. Simply in obedience to the Divine call, and as the product of creative energy, they were to spring from the plastic dust as being essentially earth-born creatures. **And it was so.** Modern evolutionists believe they can conceive—they have never yet been able to demonstrate—the *modus operandi* of the supreme Artificer in the execution of this part of the sixth day's work. Revelation has not deemed it needful to do more than simply state that they were—not, by an evolutionary process carried on through inconceivably long periods of time, developed from the creatures of the fifth day, but—produced directly from the soil by the fiat of Elohim.

Ver. 25.—**And God made** (*asah*, not *bara*, the principle of life being not now introduced for the first time, as in ver. 21) **the beast of the earth** (the *chayyah*) **after his kind, and cattle** (*behemah*) **after their kind, and every thing that creepeth on the earth** (literally, every *remes* of the ground) **after his kind.** The order of creation (ver. 25) differs from that in which they were summoned into existence (ver. 24). The latter may be the order of time, the former the order of rank; or there may have been two divisions of the work, in the former of which the *herbivora* took the lead, and in the latter the *carnivora*. According to the witness of geology, "the quadrupeds did not all come forth together. Large and powerful *herbivora* first take the field, with only a few *carnivora*. These pass away. Other *herbivora*, with a larger proportion of *carnivora*, next appear. These also are exterminated, and so with others. Then the *carnivora* appear in vast numbers and power, and the *herbivora* also abound. Moreover, these races attain a magnitude and number far surpassing all that now exist. As the mammalian age draws to a close, the ancient *carnivora* and *herbivora* of that era all pass away, excepting, it is believed, a few that are useful to man. New creations of smaller size people the groves" (Dana. Quoted by Dawson, 'O. W.' p. 224). **And God saw that it was good.** As in the third day's work each branch is sealed by the Divine approbation, so in this. The creation of the higher animals completed the earth's preparation for the advent of man; to which, doubtless, the Creator's commendation of his finished work had a special reference. Everything was in readiness for the *magnum opus* which was to close his creative labour and crown his completed cosmos.

Ver. 26.—The importance assigned in the Biblical record to the creation of man is indicated by the manner in which it is introduced. **And God said, Let us make man.** Having already explained the significance of the term *Elohim*, as suggesting the fulness of the Divine personality, and foreshadowing the doctrine of the Trinity (ver. 1), other interpretations, such as that God takes counsel with the angels (Philo, Aben Ezra, Delitzsch), or with the earth (Maimonides, M. Gerundius), or with himself (Kalisch), must be set aside in favour of that which detects in the peculiar phraseology an allusion to a sublime *concilium* among the persons of the Godhead (Calvin, Macdonald, Murphy). The object which this *concilium* contemplated was the construction of a new creature

to be named *Adam;* descriptive of either his *colour*, from *adam*, to be red, (Josephus, Gesenius, Tuch, Hupfeld); or his *appearance*, from a root in Arabic which signifies "to shine," thus making Adam "the brilliant one;" or his *compactness*, both as an individual and as a race, from another Arabic root which means "to bring or hold together" (Meier, Fürst); or his *nature* as God's image, from *dam*, likeness (Eichorn, Richers); or, and most probably, his *origin*, from *adamah*, the ground (Kimchi, Rosenmüller, Kalisch). **In our image, after our likeness.** The precise relationship in which the nature of the *Adam* about to be produced should stand to *Elohim* was to be that of a *tselem* (shadow—*vid.* Ps. xxxix. 7; Greek, σκιά, σκίασμα) and a *damuth* (likeness, from *damah*, to bring together, to compare—Isa. xl. 8). As nearly as possible the terms are synonymous. If any distinction does exist between them, perhaps *tselem* (image) denotes the shadow outline of a figure, and *damuth* (likeness) the correspondence or resemblance of that shadow to the figure. The early Fathers were of opinion that the words were expressive of separate ideas: *image*, of the body, which by reason of its beauty, intelligent aspect, and erect stature was an adumbration of God; *likeness*, of the soul, or the intellectual and moral nature. According to Augustine *image* had reference to the *cognitio veritatis; likeness* to *amor virtutis*. Irenæus, Clement, and Origen saw in the first man nature as originally created, and in the second what that nature might become through personal ethical conflict, or through the influence of grace. Bellarmine thought "imaginem in natura, similitudinem in probitate et justitia sitam esse," and conceived that "Adamum peccando non imaginem Dei, sed similitudinem perdidisse." Hävernick suggests that *image* is the concrete, and *likeness* the abstract designation of the idea. Modern expositors generally discover no distinction whatever between the words; in this respect following Luther, who renders *an image that is like*, and Calvin, who denies that any difference exists between the two. As to what in man constituted the *imago Dei*, the reformed theologians commonly held it to have consisted (1) in the spirituality of his being, as an intelligent and free agent; (2) in the moral integrity and holiness of his nature; and (3) in his dominion over the creatures (cf. West. Conf., ch. iv. 2). In this connection the profound thought of Maimonides, elaborated by Tayler Lewis (*vid.* Lange, *in loco*), should not be overlooked, that *tselem* is the specific, as opposed to the architectural, form of a thing; that which inwardly makes a thing what it is, as opposed to that external configuration which it actually possesses. It corresponds to the *min*, or kind, which determines species among animals. It is that which constitutes the genus *homo*. **And let them have dominion.** The relationship of man to the rest of creation is now defined to be one of rule and supremacy. The employment of the plural is the first indication that not simply an individual was about to be called into existence, but a race, comprising many individuals. The range of man's authority is further specified, and the sphere of his lordship traced by an enumeration in ascending order, from the lowest to the highest, of the subjects placed beneath his sway. His dominion should extend **over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air** (literally, the heavens), **and over the cattle** (the *behemah*), **and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing** (*remes*) **that creepeth upon the earth.**

Ver. 27.—**So** (or *and*) **God created** (*bara*, as in vers. 1, 21, *q. v.*) **man** (literally, the *Adam* referred to in ver. 26) **in his** own **image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.** The threefold repetition of the term "created" should be observed as a significant negation of modern evolution theories as to the descent of man, and an emphatic proclamation of his Divine original. The threefold parallelism of the members of this verse is likewise suggestive, as Umbreit, Ewald, and Delitzsch remark, of the jubilation with which the writer contemplates the crowning work of Elohim's creative word. Murphy notices two stages in man's creation, the general fact being stated in the first clause of this triumphal song, and the two particulars—first his relation to his Maker, and second his sexual distinction—in its other members. In the third clause Luther sees an intimation "that the woman also was created by God, and made a partaker of the Divine image, and of dominion over all."

Ver. 28.—**And God blessed them.** Not *him*, as LXX. As on the introduction of animal life the Divine Creator conferred on the creatures his blessing, so when the first pair of human beings are formed they are likewise enriched by their Creator's benediction. **And God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply.** As in the case of the lower creatures the Divine blessing had respect in the first instance to the propagation and perpetuation of the species, "which blessing," says Calvin, "may be regarded as the source from which the human race has flowed," a thought in full accord with Scripture teaching generally (cf. Ps. cxxvii. 3); yet by making one man and one woman an important distinction was drawn between men and beasts as regards the development of their races and the multiplication of their kind (Mal. ii. 7).

"Certe frænum viris et mulieribus non laxavit, ut in vagas libidines ruerent, absque delectu et pudore; sed a sancto castoque conjugio incipiens, descendit ad generationem" (Calvin). **And replenish the earth.** The new-created race was intended to occupy the earth. How far during the first age of the world this Divine purpose was realised continues matter of debate (ch. x.). After the Flood the confusion of tongues effected a dispersion of the nations over the three great continents of the old world. At the present day man has wandered to the ends of the earth. Yet vast realms lie unexplored, waiting his arrival. This clause may be described as *the colonist's charter*. **And subdue it.** The commission thus received was to utilise for his necessities the vast resources of the earth, by agricultural and mining operations, by geographical research, scientific discovery, and mechanical invention. **And have dominion over the fish of the sea, &c.** *I. e.* over the inhabitants of all the elements. The Divine intention with regard to his creation was thus minutely fulfilled by his investiture with supremacy over all the other works of the Divine hand. Ps. viii. is the "lyric echo" of this original sovereignty bestowed on man.

Ver. 29.—Provision for the sustenance of the newly-appointed monarch and his subjects is next made. **And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.** Of the three classes into which the vegetable creation was divided, grass, herbs, and trees (ver. 12), the two last were assigned to man for food. Macdonald thinks that without this express conveyance man would have been warranted to partake of them for nourishment, warranted by the necessities of his nature. The same reasoning, however, would have entitled him to kill the lower animals if he judged them useful for his support. Murphy with more truth remarks, "Of two things proceeding from the same creative hand, neither has any original or inherent right to interfere in any way with the other. The absolute right to each lies in the Creator alone. The one, it is true, may need the other to support its life, as fruit is needful to man; and, therefore, the just Creator cannot make one creature dependent for subsistence on another without granting to it the use of that other. But this is a matter between Creator and creature, and not by any means between creature and creature." The primitive charter of man's common property in the earth, and all that it contains, is the present section of this ancient document. Among other reasons for the formal conveyance to man of the herbs and trees may be noted a desire to keep him mindful of his dependent condition. Though lord of the creation, he was yet to draw the means of his subsistence from the creature which he ruled. Whether man was a vegetarian prior to the fall is debated. On the one hand it is contended that the original grant does not formally exclude the animals, and, in fact, says nothing about man's relation to the animals (Macdonald); that we cannot positively affirm that man's dominion over the animals did not involve the use of them for food (Murphy); and that as men offered sacrifices from their flocks, it is probable they ate the flesh of the victims (Calvin). On the other hand it is argued that the Divine language cannot be held as importing more than it really says, and that ch. ix. 3 distinctly teaches that man's right to the animal creation dates from the time of Noah (Kalisch, Knobel, Alford, &c.). Almost all nations have traditions of a golden age of innocence, when men abstained from killing animals (cf. Ovid, 'Met.,' i. 103—106). Scripture alone anticipates a time when such shall again be a characteristic of earth's inhabitants (Isa. xi. 7; lxv. 25).

Ver. 30.—**And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein** there is life, I have given **every green herb for meat.** The first of the three classes of plants, grass, was assigned to the animals for food. From this Delitzsch infers that prior to the introduction of sin the animals were not predaceous. The geological evidence of the existence of death in prehistoric times is, however, too powerful to be resisted; and the Biblical record itself enumerates among the pre-adamic animals the chayyah of the field, which clearly belonged to the carnivora. Perhaps the most that can be safely concluded from the language is "that it indicates merely the general fact that the support of the whole animal kingdom is based on vegetation" (Dawson).

Ver. 31.—**And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold,** it was **very good.** Literally, lo! good very! Not simply good, but good exceedingly. It is not man alone that God surveys, but the completed cosmos, with man as its crown and glory, *decus et tutamen.* "It is not merely a benediction which he utters, but an expression of admiration, as we may say without any fear of the anthropomorphism—*Euge, bene preclare!*" (T. Lewis). **And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.** It seems unnecessary to add that this day corresponds to the Cainozoic or tertiary era of geology, the Palæontological remains of which sufficiently attest the truth of the Divine record in asserting that animals were anterior to man in their appearance on the earth, and that man is of comparatively recent origin.

The alleged evidence of prehistoric man is too fragmentary and hypothetical to be accepted as conclusive; and yet, so far as the cosmogony of the present chapter is concerned, there is nothing to prevent the belief that man is of a much more remote antiquity than 6000 years. As of the other days, so of this the Chaldean tablets preserve an interesting monument. The seventh in the creation series, of which a fragment was discovered in one of the trenches at Kouyunjik, runs:—

1. When the gods in their assembly had created . . . .
2. Were delightful the strong monsters. .
3. They caused to be living creatures . .
4. Cattle of the field, beasts of the field, and creeping things of the field . . . .
5. They fixed for the living creatures . .
6. . . . . Cattle and creeping things of the city they fixed . . . .

. . . .

9. . . . . And the god Nin-si-ku (the lord of noble face) caused to be two . . .

in which it is not difficult to trace an account of the creation of the animal kingdom, and of the first pair of human beings.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 27.—*The greatness of man.* I. THE TIME OF HIS APPEARANCE. The latest of God's works, he was produced towards the close of the era that witnessed the introduction upon our globe of the higher animals. Taking either view of the length of the creative day, it may be supposed that in the *evening* the animals went forth "to roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God," and that in the *morning* man arose upon the variegated scene, "going forth to his work and to his labour until the evening" (Ps. civ. 20—23). In this there was a *special fitness*, each being created at the time most appropriate to its nature. Man's works are often mistimed; God's never. Likewise in man's being ushered last upon the scene there was *peculiar significance;* it was a virtual proclamation of his greatness.

II. THE SOLEMNITY OF HIS MAKING, which was preceded by a Divine consultation: "Let us make man," &c. The language of—1. *Resolution.* As if, in the production of the other creatures, the all-wise Artificer had been scarcely conscious of an effort, but must now bestir himself to the performance of his last and greatest work. 2. *Forethought.* As if his previous makings had been, in comparison with this, of so subordinate importance that they might be executed instantaneously and, as it were, without premeditation, whereas this required intelligent arrangement and wise consideration beforehand. 3. *Solicitude.* As if the insignificance of these other labours made no special call upon his personal care and attention, whereas the vastness of the present undertaking demanded the utmost possible watchfulness and caution. 4. *Delight.* As if the fashioning and beautifying of the globe and its replenishing with sentient beings, unspeakably glorious as these achievements were, afforded him no satisfaction in comparison with this which he contemplated, the creating of man in his own image (cf. Prov. viii. 31).

III. THE DIGNITY OF HIS NATURE. "Created after God's image and likeness," suggesting ideas of—1. *Affinity*, or kinship. The resplendent universe, with its suns and systems, its aerial canopy and green-mantled ground, its Alps and Himalayas, its oceans, rivers, streams, was only as plastic clay in the hands of a skilful potter. Even the innumerable tribes of living creatures that had been let loose to swarm the deep, to cleave the sky, to roam the earth, were animated by a principle of being that had no closer connection with the Deity than that which effect has with cause; but the life which inspired man was a veritable outcome from the personality of God (Gen. ii. 7). Hence man was something higher than a creature. As *imago Dei* he was God's son (Mal. ii. 10; Acts xvii. 28). 2. *Resemblance.* A distinct advance upon the previous thought, although implied in it. This likeness or similitude consisted in—(1) Personality. Light, air, land, sea, sun, moon, stars were "things." Plants, fishes, fowls, animals were "lives," although the first are never so characterised in Scripture. Man was a "person." (2) Purity. The image of absolute holiness must itself be immaculate. In this sense Christ was "the *express* image of God's person" (Heb. i. 3); and though man is not now a complete likeness of his Maker in the moral purity of his nature, when he came from the Creator's hand he was. It is the object of Christ's work to renew in man the image of his Maker (Ephes. iv. 24). (3) Power. That man's Creator was a God of power was implied

in his name, ELOHIM, and demonstrated by his works. Even fallen man we can perceive to be possessed of many elements of power that are the shadows of that which resided in Elohim—the power of self-government, and of lordship over the creatures, of language and of thought, of volition and of action, of originating, at least in a secondary sense, and of combining and arranging. In the first man they resided in perfection. 3. *Representation*. Man was created in God's image that he might be a visible embodiment of the Supreme to surrounding creatures. "The material world, with its objects sublimely great or meanly little, as we judge them; its atoms of dust, its orbs of fire; the rock that stands by the seashore, the water that wears it away; the worm, a birth of yesterday, which we trample underfoot; the sheets of the constellations that gleam perennial overhead; the aspiring palm tree fixed to one spot, and the lions that are sent out free—these incarnate and make visible all of God their natures will admit." Man in his nature was intended as the highest representation of God that was possible short of the incarnation of the Word himself.

IV. THE GRANDEUR OF HIS DOMINION. Man was designed to be God's image in respect of royalty and lordship; and as no one can play the monarch without a kingdom and without subjects, God gave him both an empire and a people. 1. *An empire*. (1) Of wide extent. In the regal charter reaching to the utmost bounds of this terrestrial sphere (ver. 26). (2) Of available character. Not a region that was practically unconquerable, but every square inch of it capable of subjugation and occupation. (3) Of vast resources. Everything in heaven, earth, and sea was placed at his command. (4) Of incalculable value. Nothing was absolutely useless, and many things were precious beyond compare. (5) Of perfect security. God had given it to him. The grant was absolute, the gift was sure. 2. *A people*. (1) Numerous. "Every living thing" was subjected to his sway. (2) Varied. The fishes, fowls, and beasts were his servants (3) Submissive. As yet they had not broken loose against their master. (4) Given. They were not acquired by the sword, but donated by their Maker.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 24—31.—*The sixth day*. We pass from the sea and air to the earth. We are being led to man. Notice—

I. THE PREPARATION IS COMPLETE. Before the earth receives the human being, it brings forth all the other creatures, and God sees that they are good—good in his sight, good for man.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE WORK IS BENEVOLENT. Cattle, creeping thing, beast of the earth. So man would see them distinguished—the wild from the domestic, the creeping from the roaming, the clean from the unclean. The division itself suggests the immense variety of the Divine provision for man's wants.

III. The incompleteness of the earth when filled with the lower creatures is A TESTIMONY TO THE GREATNESS OF MAN'S SPIRITUAL NATURE; for in comparison with the animal races he is in many respects inferior—in strength, swiftness, and generally in the powers which we call instinct. Yet his appearance is the climax of the earth's creation. "Man is one world, and hath another to attend him." Vegetable, marine, animal life generally, the whole earth filled with what God "saw to be good," waits for the rational and spiritual creature who shall be able to recognise their order and wield dominion over them. Steps and stages in creation lead up to the climax, the "paragon of animals," the god-like creature, made to be king on the earth.—R.

Vers. 26, 27.—*The creation of man*. Take it—I. As a revelation of God in his relation to man. II. As a revelation of man to himself.

I. GOD IN RELATION TO MAN. 1. As the *Father* as well as *Creator*. As to the rest of creation, it is said, "Let be," and "it was." As to man, "Let us make in our image." Closely kin by original nature, man is invited to intercourse with the Divine. 2. The *spirituality* of God's highest creature is the bond of union and fellowship. The language, "Let us make," suggests the conception of a heavenly

council or conference preparatory to the creation of man; and the new description of the being to be created points to the introduction of a new order of life—the spiritual life, as above the vegetable and animal. 3. God intrusts *dominion* and authority to man in the earth. Man holds from the first the position of a vicegerent for God. There is trust, obedience, responsibility, recognition of Divine supremacy, therefore all the essential elements of religion, in the original constitution and appointment of our nature and position among the creatures. 4. The ultimate *destiny* of man is included in the account of his beginning. He who made him in his image, "one of us," will call him upward to be among the super-earthly beings surrounding the throne of the Highest. The possession of a Divine image is the pledge of eternal approximation to the Divine presence. The Father calls the children about himself.

II. MAN REVEALED TO HIMSELF. "The image and likeness of God." What does that contain? There is the ideal humanity. 1. There is an *affinity* in the intellectual nature between the human and the Divine. In every rational being, though feeble in amount of mental capacity, there is a sense of eternal necessary truth. On some lines the creature and the Creator think under the same laws of thought, though the distance be immeasurable. 2. Man *is by original creation absolutely free from moral taint*. He is therefore a fallen being in so far as he is a morally imperfect being. He was made like God in purity, innocence, goodness. 3. The resemblance must be in *spirit* as well as in intellect and moral nature. Man was made to be the companion of God and angels, therefore there is in his earthly existence a super-earthly, spiritual nature which must be ultimately revealed. 4. *Place and vocation* are assigned to man on earth, and that in immediate connection with his likeness to God. He is ruler here that he may be prepared for higher rule elsewhere. He is put in his rank among God's creatures that he may see himself on the ascent to God. Man belongs to two worlds. He is like God, and yet he is male and female, like the lower animals. He is blessed as other creatures with productive power to fill the earth, but he is blessed for the sake of his special vocation, to subdue the earth, not for himself, but for God. 5. Here is the *end of all our endeavour* and desire—to be perfect men by being like God. Let us be thankful that there is a God-man in whom we are able to find our ideal realised. We grow up into him who is our Head. We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. When all things are put under him, man will see the original perfection of his creation restored. 6. Man is taught *that he need not leave the earthly sphere to be like God*. There has been a grand preparation of his habitation. From a mere chaotic mass the earth has by progressive stages reached a state when it can become the scene of a great moral experiment for man's instruction. The god-like is to rule over all other creatures, that he may learn the superiority of the spiritual. Heavenly life, communion, society, and all that is included in the fellowship of man with God, may be developed in the condition of earth. Grievous error in early Church and Eastern philosophy—confusion of the material and evil. Purity does not require an immaterial mode of existence. Perfection of man is perfection of his dominion over earthly conditions, matter in subjection to spirit. Abnormal methods, asceticism, self-crucifixion, mere violence to original constitution of man. The "second Adam" overcame the world not by forsaking it, but by being in it, and yet not of it. 7. God's commandments to man are *commandments of Fatherly love*. "*Behold, I have given you*," &c. He not only appoints the service, but he provides the sustenance. "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God*," &c. Here is the union of creative power and providential goodness. We are blessed in an earthly life just as we take it from the hand of God as a trust to be fulfilled for him. And in that obedience and dependence we shall best be able to reach the ideal humanity. The fallen world has been degrading man, physically, morally, spiritually; he has been less and less what God made him to be. But he who has come to restore the kingdom of God has come to uplift man and fill the earth with blessedness.—R.

Ver. 31.—*Perfection*. The first chapter closes with a review of the whole work of the six days. God saw it. Behold, it was very good!

I. The SATISFACTION was in the completion of the earthly order in man, the highest earthly being. For God's "*good*" is not, like man's "*good*," a compromise, too

often, between the really good and the really evil, but the attainment of the *highest*—the fulfilment of his Divine idea, the top-stone placed upon the temple with shoutings: "Grace, grace unto it."

II. "The evening and the morning were the sixth day." OUT OF THE NIGHT OF THE INFINITE PAST CAME FORTH THE DAWN OF THE INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL WORLD. And when God saw that, then he said, It is very good. So let us set our faces towards that light of heaven on earth, the *day of Divine revelation*, Divine intercourse with man, the pure and perfect bliss of an everlasting paradise, in which God and man shall find unbroken rest and joy in one another.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1.—**Thus the heavens and the earth were finished.** Literally, And finished were the heavens and the earth, the emphatic position being occupied by the verb. With the creation of man upon the sixth day the Divine Artificer's labours were brought to a termination, and his work to a completion. The two ideas of cessation and perfection are embraced in the import of *calah*. Not simply had Elohim paused in his activity, but the Divine idea of his universe had been realised. The finished world was a cosmos, arranged, ornamented, and filled with organised, sentient, and rational beings, with plants, animals, and man; and now the resplendent fabric shone before him a magnificent success—"lo! very good." This appears to be by no means obscurely hinted at in the appended clause, **and all the host of them,** which suggests the picture of a military armament arranged in marching order. *Tsebaam*, derived from *tsaba*, to go forth as a soldier (Gesenius), to join together for service (Fürst), and applied to the angels (*στρατία οὐράνιος*, Luke ii. 13. 1 Kings xxii. 19; 2 Chron. xviii. 18; Ps. cxlviii. 2) and to the celestial bodies (*δύναμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν*, Matt. xxiv. 29. Isa. xxxiv. 4; xl. 26; Dan. viii. 10), here includes, by Zeugma, the material heavens and earth with the angelic and human races (cf. Neh. ix. 6). If the primary signification of the root be splendour, glory, like *tsavah*, to come forth or shine out as a star (T. Lewis), then will the LXX. and the Vulgate be correct in translating *πᾶς ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν* and *omnis ornatus eorum*, the conception being that when the heavens and the earth were completed they were a brilliant array.

Ver. 2.—**And on the seventh day God** (Elohim) **ended his work which he had made.** To avert the possibility of imagining that any portion of the seventh day was consumed in working, which the English version seems to favour, the LXX., the Samaritan, and Syriac versions insert the *sixth* day in the text instead of the seventh. Calvin, Drusius, Le Clerc, Rosenmüller, and Kalisch translate *had finished*. Others understand the sense to be *declared* the work to be finished, while Baumgarten and Delitzsch regard the resting as included in the completion of the work, and Von Bohlen thinks "the language is not quite precise." But *calah* followed by *min* signifies to cease from prosecuting any work (Exod. xxxiv. 33; 1 Sam. x. 13; Ezek. xliii. 23), and this was, negatively, the aspect of that sabbatic rest into which the Creator entered. **And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.** *Shavath*, the primary idea of which is to sit still, depicts Elohim as desisting from his creative labours, and assuming a posture of quiescent repose. The expression is a pure anthropomorphism. "He who fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. xl. 28), can be conceived of neither as resting nor as needing rest through either exhaustion or fatigue. Cessation from previous occupation is all that is implied in the figure, and is quite compatible with continuous activity in other directions. John v. 17 represents the Father as working from that period onward in the preservation and redemption of that world which by his preceding labours he had created and made.

Ver. 3.—**And God blessed the seventh day.** The blessing (cf. ch. i. 22, 28) of the seventh day implied—1. That it was thereby declared to be the special object of the Divine favour. 2. That it was thenceforth to be a day or epoch of blessing for his creation. And—3. That it was to be invested with a permanence which did not belong to the other six days—every one of which passed away and gave place to a successor. **And sanctified it.** Literally, declared it holy, or set it apart for holy purposes. As afterwards Mount Sinai was sanctified (Exod. xix. 23), or, for the time being, invested with a sacred character as the residence of God; and Aaron and his sons were sanctified, or consecrated to the priestly office (Exod. xxix. 44); and the year of Jubilee was sanctified, or devoted to the purposes of religion (Levit. xxv. 10), so here was the seventh day sanctified, or instituted in the interests of holiness, and as such proclaimed to be a holy day. **Because that in it he had**

rested from all his work which God had created and made. Literally, *created to make*, the exact import of which has been variously explained. The "*ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ θεός ποιῆσαι*" of the LXX. is obviously incorrect. Calvin, Ainsworth, Bush, *et alii* take the second verb *emphatice*, as intensifying the action of the first, and conveying the idea of a perfect creation. Kalisch, Alford, and others explain the second as *epexegetic* of the first, as in the similar phrases, "spoke, saying, literally, spoke to speak" (Exod. vi. 10), and "laboured to do" (Eccles. ii. 11). Onkelos, the Vulgate (*quod Deus creavit ut faceret*), Calvin, Tayler Lewis, &c. understand the infinitive in a *telic* sense, as expressive of the purpose for which the heavens and the earth were at first created, viz., that by the six days' work they might be fashioned into a cosmos. It has been observed that the usual concluding formula is not appended to the record of the seventh day, and the reason has perhaps been declared by Augustine: "Dies autem septimus sine vespera est, nec habet occasum, quia sanctificasti eum ad permansionem sempiternam" ('Confess.,' xiii. 36). But now what was this seventh day which received Elohim's benediction? On the principle of interpretation applied to the creative days, this must be regarded as a period of indefinite duration, corresponding to the human era of both Scripture and geology. But other Scriptures (Exod. xx. 8; xxiii. 12; Deut. v. 12, &c.) show that the Hebrews were enjoined by God to observe a seventh day rest in imitation of himself. There are also indications that sabbatic observance was not unknown to the patriarchs (ch. xxix. 27, 28), to the antediluvians (ch. viii. 6—12), and to Cain and Abel (ch. iv. 3). Profane history likewise vouches for the veracity of the statement of Josephus, that "there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come" ('Contra Apionem,' ii. 40). The ancient Persians, Indians, and Germans esteemed the number seven as sacred. By the Greeks and Phenicians a sacred character was ascribed to the seventh day. The Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and other nations of antiquity were acquainted with the hebdomadal division of time. Travellers have detected traces of it among the African and American aborigines. To account for its existence among nations so widely apart, both chronologically and geographically, recourse has been had to some violent hypotheses; as, *e. g.*, to the number of the primary planets known to the ancients (Humboldt), the division of a lunar month into four nearly equal periods of seven days (Ideler, Baden Powell, &c.), Jewish example (Josephus). Its true genesis, however, must be sought for in the primitive observance of a seventh day rest in accordance with Divine appointment. Precisely as we reason that the early and widespread prevalence of sacrifice can only be explained by an authoritative revelation to the first parents of the human family of such a mode of worship, so do we conclude that a seventh day sabbath must have been prescribed to man in Eden. The question then arises, Is this sabbath also referred to in the Mosaic record of the seventh day? The popular belief is that the institution of the weekly sabbath alone is the subject spoken of in the opening verses of the present chapter; and the language of Exod. xx. 11 may at first sight appear to warrant this conclusion. A more careful consideration of the phraseology employed by Moses, however, shows that in the mind of the Hebrew lawgiver there existed a distinction between God's seventh day and man's sabbath, and that, instead of identifying the two, he meant to teach that the first was the reason of the second; as thus—"In six days God made .... and rested on the seventh day; wherefore God blessed the (weekly) sabbath day, and hallowed it." Here it is commonly assumed that the words are exactly parallel to those in ch. ii. 3, and that the sabbath in Exodus corresponds to the seventh day of Genesis. But this is open to debate. The seventh day which God blessed in Eden was the first day of human life, and not the seventh day; and it is certain that God did not rest from his labours on man's seventh day, but on man's first. We feel inclined then to hold with Luther that in Gen. ii. 3 Moses says nothing about man's day, and that the seventh day which received the Divine benediction was God's own great æonian period of sabbatic rest. At the same time, for the reasons above specified, believing that a weekly sabbath was prescribed to man from the beginning, we have no difficulty in assenting to the words of Tayler Lewis: "'And God blessed the seventh day.' Which seventh day, the greater or the less, the Divine or the human, the æonian or the astronomical? Both, is the easy answer; both, as commencing at the same time, so far as the one connects with astronomical time; both, as the greater including the less; both, as being (the one as represented, the other as typically representing) the same in essence and idea." It does not appear necessary to refute the idea that the weekly sabbath had no existence till the giving of the law, and that it is only here proleptically referred to by Moses.

In addition to the above-mentioned historical testimonies to the antiquity of the Sabbath, the Fifth Tablet in the Chaldean Creation Series, after referring to the fourth day's work, proceeds;—

"On the seventh day he appointed a holy day,
And to cease from all business he commanded.
Then arose the sun in the horizon of heaven in (glory)."

thus apparently affirming that, in the opinion of the early Babylonians, the institution of the sabbath was coeval with the creation. (*Vid.* 'Records of the Past,' vol. ix. p. 117.)

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 3. *The two sabbaths: the Divine and the human.* I. THE SABBATH OF GOD. A period of—1. *Cessation from toil*, or discontinuance of those world-making operations which had occupied the six preceding days (Heb. iv. 4). Never since the close of the creative week has God interfered to fundamentally rearrange the material structure of the globe. The Deluge produced no alteration on the constitution of nature. Nor is there evidence that any new species have been added to its living creatures. 2. *Holy delight.* On the seventh day Elohim rested and was "refreshed" (Exod. xxxi. 17); which refreshment consisted partly in the satisfaction he experienced in beholding the cosmos—a satisfaction prefigured and anticipated by the solemn pauses intervening at the end of each creative day, accompanied by the "good," "lo! very good," of Divine approbation; and partly in the pleasure with which he contemplated the peculiar work of blessing his creation which lay before him, a work which also had its foreshadowings in the benedictions pronounced on the living creatures of the fifth day, and on man on the sixth. 3. *Beneficent activity.* Even man, unless where his intellectual and moral faculties are dormant, finds it difficult to rest in indolence and inactivity. Absence of motion, with complete negation of effort, may constitute the refreshment of the physical system. The mind seeks its rest in change of occupation. Still less can the supreme Intelligence, who is pure Spirit, rest in absolute inaction; only the Divine energy is now directed towards the happiness of his creatures (Ps. cxlv. 9). Having finished his creative labours, what else could Elohim do but outpour his own blessedness upon his creatures, in proportion to their capacities to receive it? His nature as God necessitated such communication of good to his creatures (Ps. xxxiv. 8; James i. 5, 17). The capacities of his creatures for such blessing required it. Hence God's rest may be said to have been man's birthright. He was created in that rest, as the sphere of his existence. 4. *Continuous duration.* That which secures its perpetuity is the Divine resolution to bless it, *i. e.* constitute it an era of blessing for man, and in particular to sanctify it, or devote it to the interests of holiness. And in this Divine determination lies *the pledge of man's salvation.* Without it God's rest might have been broken into by man's sin, and the era of blessing ended. But, because of it, man's sin could not change the character of God's seventh day, so as to prevent it from dropping down gifts and exercising holy influences on the creature for whose sake it was appointed. *The security of the world as a cosmos* may also be said to be involved in the permanence of God's sabbath. So long as it continues nothing shall occur to resolve the present goodly framework of this globe into another lightless, formless, lifeless chaos, at least until the Divine purpose with the human race has been fulfilled.

II. THE SABBATH OF MAN. 1. Of *Divine institution* (Exod. xx. 8; Levit. xix. 30; Ps. cxviii. 24). That God had a right to enact a weekly sabbath for man is implied in his relation to man as Creator and Lawgiver. For man, therefore, to withhold the seventh portion of his time is to be guilty of disobedience against God as a moral Governor, ingratitude towards God as Creator and Preserver, robbery of God as the original Proprietor of both man's powers and time's days. As an institution of God's appointing, the sabbath deserves our honour and esteem. To neglect to render this God counts a sin (Isa. lviii. 13). 2. Of *sacred character.* Among the Israelites its sanctity was to be recognised by abstinence from bodily labour (Exod. xx. 10; xxxiv. 21, &c.) and holy convocations (Levit. xxiii. 3).. That this was the manner of its observance prior to the giving of the law may be judged from the regulations concerning the manna (Exod. xvi. 22). That from the beginning it was a day of rest and religious worship may be reasonably inferred. That it was so used by Christ and his apostles the Gospels attest (Luke iv. 16). That the same character was held to attach to the first day of the week after Christ's resurrection

may be deduced from the practice of the apostolic Church (Acts xx. 7). The sanctity of the sabbath may be profaned, *positively*, by prosecuting one's ordinary labours in its hours (Isa. lviii. 13; Jer. xvii. 24); *negatively*, by neglecting to devote them to Divine worship and spiritual improvement (Ezek. xliv. 24). Christianity has not obliterated the distinction between the sabbath and the other days of the week; not even by elevating them to the position of *holy* days. An attempt to equalise the seven days always results in the degradation of the seventh, never in the elevation of the other six. 3. Of *beneficent design* (Mark ii. 27). The sabbath is adapted to the wants of man physically, intellectually, socially, politically. Innumerable facts and testimonies establish the beneficial influence of a seventh day's rest from toil upon the manual labourer, the professional thinker, the social fabric, the body politic, in respect of health, wealth, strength, happiness. It is, however, chiefly man's elevation as a religious being at which it aims. In the paradisaiacal state it was designed to hedge him round and, if possible, prevent his fall; since the tragedy in Eden it has been seeking his reinstatement in that purity from which he fell. 4. Of *permanent obligation*. Implied in the terms of its institution, its permanence would not be affected by the abolition of the Decalogue. The Decalogue presupposed its previous appointment. Christianity takes it up, just as Judaism took it up, as one of God's existing ordinances for the good of man, and seeks through it to bring its higher influences to bear on man, just as Judaism sought, through it, to operate with its inferior agency. Till it merges in the rest of which it is a shadow by the accomplishment of its grand design, it must abide.

III. THE CONNECTION OF THE TWO. God's rest is—1. The *reason* of man's sabbath. The Almighty could have no higher reason for enjoining a seventh day's rest upon his creature than that by so resting that creature would be like himself. 2. The *pattern* of man's sabbath. As God worked through six of his days and rested on the seventh, so should man toil through six of his days and rest on the seventh. As God did *all* his work in the six creative days, so should *all* man's labour be performed in the six days of the week. As God employs his rest in contemplation of his finished work and in blessing his creature man, so should man devote his sabbath to pious meditation on his past life and to a *believing* reception of God's gifts of grace and salvation. 3. The *life* of man's sabbath. Whatever blessing comes to man on his weekly day of rest has its primal fountain in the rest of God. As man himself is God's image, so is man's sabbath the image of God's rest; and as man lives and moves and has his being in God, so does man's sabbath live and move and have its being in God's rest. 4. The *end* of man's sabbath. The reinstatement of man in God's rest is the purpose at which man's sabbath aims, the goal towards which it is tending. God's rest remains on high (Heb. iv. 9), drawing men towards it. Man's weekly sabbath will ultimately lose itself in God's eternal rest.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Rest and Light.* The finished heavens and earth and their host prepare the day of rest. God ended his work as an interchange of darkness and light.

I. THE REST OF THE SABBATH IS NOT INACTION, BUT THE CESSATION FROM THE LOWER ORDER OF WORK FOR THE HIGHER. The idea of the first proclamation seems to be that creation was perfectly adjusted through the six days into a settled harmony which puts heaven and earth in their abiding relation to one another.

II. Then THERE IS NO MORE SAID OF EVENING AND MORNING The seventh day is only *light*. God's rest is complacency in his works. The blessing on the seventh day which hallowed it is the blessing on that which the day represents—perfect peace between heaven and earth, God satisfied in his creation, and inviting his intelligent creatures to "*enter into his rest*" by communion with him. It seems quite unnecessary to vindicate such a sanctification of the seventh day from the insinuations of critics that it was a late addition made by the Jewish legislator to support the fourth commandment. In that case the whole cosmogony must be renounced. Such an observance of a day of rest seems a natural antecedent to the patriarchal as well as the Mosaic economy. We have already intimated that the whole account of creation

is placed at the commencement of revelation because it has a bearing upon the positive ordinances of religion. It is not either a scientific or poetic sketch of the universe; it is the broad, fundamental outline of a system of religious truth connected with a body of Divine commandments. The sabbath is thus described in its original breadth. The sanctification of it is—1. *Negative.* It is separation *from* the lower conditions of work, which in the case of man are the characteristics of days which are sinful days—days of toil and conflict, of darkness and light mingled. 2. *Positive.* It is the restful enjoyment of a higher life, a life which is not labouring after emancipation from bondage, but perfect with a glorious liberty; the true *day*, "*sacred, high, eternal noon*," God and man rejoicing in one another, the creature reflecting the glory of the Creator.—R.

§ 2. The Generations of the Heavens and of the Earth (ch. ii. 4—iv. 26).

EXPOSITION.

The subject handled in the present section is the primeval history of man in his paradisaical state of innocence, his temptation and fall, and his subsequent development, in two diverging lines, of faith and unbelief, holiness and sin. On the ground of certain obvious, well-defined, and readily-explained characteristics which distinguish this from the preceding portion of the narrative, it is usual with the higher criticism to allege diversity of authorship; and, indeed, these same characteristics, magnified by misapplied ingenuity into insoluble contradictions, are the chief buttress of the documentary hypothesis of Astruc, Hupfeld, Tuch, Ewald, and others. Now the hypothesis that Moses, in the composition of the Pentateuch, and of this Book of Origins in particular, made use of existing documents that may have descended from a remote antiquity is, *à priori*, neither incredible nor impossible; but, on the contrary, is extremely probable, and may be held as admitted; only the alleged peculiarities of the different portions of the narrative do not justify the reckless confidence with which it has been resolved by Stähelin, Bleek, De Wette, Knobel, Ewald, and Davidson into its so-called original fragments; and, in the case of Ewald, primordial atoms (*vid.* Introd., p. ii.). The occurrence of the name *Jehovah Elohim*, instead of simply *Elohim*, as in the preceding section, is the chief peculiarity of the present portion of the narrative, so far as style and language are concerned; its alleged irreconcilable differences in subject-matter are skilfully and succinctly put by Kalisch. "In the first cosmogony vegetation is immediately produced by the will of God; in the second its existence is made dependent on rain and mists and the agricultural labours: in the first the earth emerges from the waters, and is, therefore, saturated with moisture; in the second it appears dry, sterile, and sandy: in the first man and his wife are created together; in the second the wife is formed later, and from a part of man: in the former man bears the image of God, and is made ruler of the whole earth; in the latter his earth-formed body is only animated by the breath of life, and he is placed in Eden to cultivate and to guard it: in the former the birds and beasts are created before man; in the latter man before birds and beasts." For a reply to these "insoluble contradictions," which, though "too obvious to be overlooked or denied," are mostly, if not solely, due to a false exegesis and a misapprehension of the guiding purpose of the writer, see the Exposition following, which attempts no "artificial solution" such as Kalisch deprecates, and proposes no ingenious reconciliation of essentially opposing statements, but simply shows that, when naturally and literally interpreted, the narrative is free from those internal antagonisms which a microscopic criticism imagines it has detected in it. The *internal unity* of the present writing, or second document, as it is called, is apparent. The internecine struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which the fratricidal act of Cain inaugurated (ch. iv.), is the legitimate and necessary outcome of the sin and the grace revealed in Eden (ch. iii.), while the melancholy story of the temptation and the fall

presupposes the paradisaical innocence of the first pair (ch. ii.). Thus homogeneous in itself, it likewise *connects with the preceding section* through ch. ii., which, as a monograph on man, supplies a more detailed account of his creation than is given in the narrative of the six days' work, and, by depicting man's settlement in Eden as a place of trial, prepares the way for the subsequent recital of his seduction and sin, and of his consequent expulsion from the garden.

Ver. 4.—**These are the generations** is the usual heading for the different sections into which the Book of Genesis is divided (*vid.* ch. v. 1; vi. 9; x. 1; xi. 10, 27; xxv. 12, 19; xxxvi. 1; xxxvii. 2). Misled by the LXX., who render *tōldōth* by *ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως*, Ranke, Tiele, Hävernick, Tuch, Ewald, and Stähelin disconnect the entire verse from the second section, which says nothing about the origination of the heavens and the earth, and append it to the preceding, in which their creation is described. Ilgen improves on their suggestion by transferring it to the commencement of ch. i., as an appropriate superscription. Dreschler, Vaihinger, Bohlen, Oehler, Macdonald, *et alii* divide the verse into two clauses, and annex the former to what precedes, commencing the ensuing narrative with the latter. All of these proposals are, however, rendered unnecessary by simply observing that *tōldōth* (from *yaladh*, to bear, to beget; hence begettings, procreations, evolutions, developments) does not describe the antecedents, but the consequents, of either thing or person (Rosen., Keil, Kalisch). The *tōldōth* of Noah are not the genealogical list of the patriarch's ancestry, but the tabulated register of his posterity; and so the generations **of the heavens and the earth** refer not to their original production (Gesenius), but to their onward movements from creation downwards (Keil). Hence with no incongruity, but with singular propriety, the first half of the present verse, ending with the words **when they were created**, literally, *in their creation*, stands at the commencement of the section in which the forward progression of the universe is traced. The point of departure in this subsequent evolution of the material heavens and earth is further specified as being **in the day that the Lord God** (Jehovah Elohim) **made the earth and the heavens**; not the heavens and the earth, which would have signified the universe (*vid.* on ch. i. 1), and carried back the writer's thought to the initial act of creation; but the earth and the atmospheric firmament, which indicates the period embracing the second and (possibly) the third creative days as the *terminus a quo* of the generations to be forthwith recorded. Then it was that the heavens and the earth in their development took a clear and decided step forward in the direction of man and the human family (was it in the appearance of vegetation?); and in this thought perhaps will be found the key to the significance of the new name for the Divine Being which is used exclusively throughout the present section—**Jehovah Elohim.** From the frequency of its use, and the circumstance that it never has the article, **Jehovah** may be regarded as the proper personal name of God. Either falsely interpreting Exod. xx. 7 and Levit. xxiv. 11, or following some ancient superstition (mysterious names of deities were used generally in the East; the Egyptian Hermes had a name which (Cic. 'de Natura Deorum,' 8, 16) durst not be uttered: Fürst), the later Hebrews invested this *nomen tetragrammaton* with such sanctity that it might not be pronounced (Philo, 'Vit. Mosis,' iii. 519, 529). Accordingly, it was their custom to write it in the sacred text with the vowel points of *Adonai*, or, if that preceded, Elohim. Hence considerable doubt now exists as to its correct pronunciation. Etymologically viewed it is a future form of *havah*, an old form of *hayah;* uncertainty as to what future has occasioned many different suggestions as to what constituted its primitive vocalisation. According to the evidence which scholars have collected, the choice lies between (1) Jahveh (Gesenius, Ewald, Reland, Oehler, Macdonald, the Samaritan), (2) Yehveh or Yeheveh (Fürst, W. L. Alexander, in Kitto's 'Cyclopedia'), and (3) Jehovah (Michaelis, Meyer, Stier, Hoelmann, Tregelles, Murphy). Perhaps the preponderance of authority inclines to the first; but the common punctuation is not so indefensible as some writers allege. Gesenius admits that it more satisfactorily accounts for the abbreviated syllables יְהוֹ and יוֹ than the pronunciation which he himself favours. Murphy thinks that the substitution of Adonai for Jehovah was facilitated by the agreement of their vowel points. The *locus classicus* for its signification is Exod. iii. 14, in which God defines himself as "I am that I am," and commands Moses to tell the children of Israel that *Ehyeh* had sent him. Hengstenberg and Keil conclude that absolute self-existence is the essential idea represented by the name (cf. Exod. iii. 14; *ὁ ὤν*, LXX.; Rev. i. 4, 8; *ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, *vid.* Fürst, 'Lex. sub nom.'). Baumgarten and Delitzsch, laying stress on its future form, regard it as = the Becoming One, with reference to the revelation, rather than the essence, of the Divine nature. Macdonald, from the circumstance that it was not used till after the fall, discovers a pointing forward to Jehovah as *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* in connection with redemption.

Others, deriving from a hiphil future, take it as denoting "he who causes to be, the Fulfiller," and find in this an explanation of Exod. vi. 3 (Exell). May not all these ideas be more or less involved in the fulness of the Divine name? As distinguished from Elohim, *Deus omnipotens*, the mighty One, Jehovah is the absolute, self-existent One, who manifests himself to man, and, in particular, enters into distinct covenant engagements for his redemption, which he in due time fulfils. In the present section the names are conjoined partly to identify Jehovah with Elohim, and partly because the subject of which it treats is the history of man.

Ver. 5.—**And every plant of the field before it was** (literally, not yet) **in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew** (literally, had not yet sprouted). Following the LXX., the English Version suggests an intention on the writer's part to emphasise the fact that the vegetation of the globe—here comprehended under the general terms, *shiah*, shrub, and *eseb*, herb—was not a natural production, but, equally with the great earth and heavens, was the creation of Jehovah Elohim—a rendering which has the sanction of Tayler Lewis; whereas the writer's object clearly is to depict the appearance of the earth at the time when the man-ward development of the heavens and the earth began. Then not a single plant was in the ground, not a green blade was visible. The land, newly sprung from the waters. was one desolate region of bleak, bare lava-hills and extensive mud-flats. Up to that point the absence of vegetation is accounted for by the circumstance that the presently existing atmospheric conditions of the globe had not then been established, **for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth,** and the ordinary agricultural operations on which its production was afterwards to depend had not then been begun, **and** there was **not a man to till the ground.**

Ver. 6.—**But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.** The dry land having been separated from the waters, and the atmospheric ocean uplifted above them both, vaporous exhalations began to ascend to the aerial regions, and to return again in the shape of rain upon the ground. Jehovah thus *caused it to rain* upon the ground, and so prepared it for the vegetation which, in obedience to the Almighty fiat, sprung up at the close of the third day, although the writer does not mention its appearance, but leaves it to be inferred from the preceding section. That soon after its emergence from the waters the land should be "dry, sterile, and sandy" will not be thought remarkable if we remember the highly igneous condition of our planet at the time when the dry land was upheaved and the waters gathered into the subsiding valleys. Nothing would more naturally follow that event than the steaming up of vapours to float in the aerial sea. In fact, the rapidity with which evaporation would be carried on would very speedily leave the newly-formed land hard and dry, baked and caked into a crust, till the atmosphere, becoming overcharged with aqueous vapour, returned it in the shape of rain. To talk of insuperable difficulty and manifest dissonance where everything is clear, natural, and harmonious is to speak at random, and betrays an anxiety to create contradictions rather than to solve them.

Ver. 7.—**And the Lord God** (Jehovah Elohim) **formed man of the dust of the ground.** Literally, dust from the ground. Here, again, Bleek, Kalisch, and the theologians of their school discover contrariety between this account of man's creation and that which has been given in the preceding chapter. *In that* man is represented as having been created by the Divine word, in the Divine image, and male and female simultaneously; whereas *in this* his creation is exhibited as a painful process of elaboration from the clay by the hand of God, who works it like a potter (*asah*; LXX., πλάσσω), and, after having first constructed man, by a subsequent operation forms woman. But the first account does not assert that Adam and Eve were created together, and gives no details of the formation of either. These are supplied by the present narrative, which, beginning with the construction of his body from the fine dust of the ground, designedly represents it as an evolution or development of the material universe, and ends by setting it before us as animated by the breath of God, reserving for later treatment the mode of Eve's production, when the circumstances that led to it have been described. **And** (the Lord God) **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.** Literally, the breath of lives. "The formation of man from the dust and the breathing of the breath of life must not be understood in a mechanical sense, as if God first of all constructed a human figure from the dust" (still less does it admit of the idea that man's physical nature was evolved from the lower animals), "and then, by breathing his breath of life into the clod of earth which he had shaped into the form of a man, made it into a living being. The words are to be understood θεοπρεπῶς. By an act of Divine omnipotence man arose from the dust; and in the same moment in which the dust, by virtue of creative omnipotence, shaped itself into a human form, it was pervaded by the Divine breath of life, and created a living being, so that we cannot say the body was earlier than the soul" (Delitzsch). **And man became a**

living soul. *Nephesh chayyah,* in ch. i. 21, 30, is employed to designate the lower animals. Describing a being animated by a ψυχή or life principle, it does not necessarily imply that the basis of the life principle in man and the inferior animals is the same. The distinction between the two appears from the difference in the mode of their creations. The beasts arose at the almighty fiat completed beings, every one a *nephesh chayyah.* "The origin of their soul was coincident with that of their corporeality, and their life was merely the individualisation of the universal life with which all matter was filled at the beginning by the Spirit of God" (Delitzsch). Man received his life from a distinct act of Divine inbreathing; certainly not an inbreathing of atmospheric air, but an inflatus from the Ruach Elohim, or Spirit of God, a communication from the whole personality of the Godhead. In effect man was thereby constituted a *nephesh chayyah,* like the lower animals; but in him the life principle conferred a personality which was wanting in them. Thus there is no real contradiction, scarcely even an "apparent dissonance," between the two accounts of man's creation. The second exhibits the foundation of that likeness to God and world-dominion ascribed to him in the first.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 7.—*The first man.* I. Made from the dust. This does not imply that in the composition of humanity there is nothing but particles of dust, or "molecules of matter." Simply it designs to state that the point of departure in man's creation was the soil out of which all other living creatures were produced; that, so to speak, man was constructed from beneath upwards, the Divine Artificer proceeding with his creation in the same ascending scale of activity that had been observed in the production of the rest of the universe—first the material body, and then the immaterial soul; and that, so far as the former is concerned, man is wholly and solely of the earth, earthy,—an assertion which the researches of chemistry and physiology abundantly confirm,—the elements of organised bodies being the same as those which constitute the inorganic world, viz., carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, lime, iron, sulphur, and phosphorus. The statement is fitted to impress man with thoughts—1. Of his *lowly origin.* While the Scripture in general labours to imbue his mind with correct ideas of his obscure nativity, comparing him to a wind, to a vapour, to a flower, to the beasts, to a worm, the sentiment of Moses takes him lower yet for his birthplace—to the dust of the ground, above which the wind blows, from which the vapours rise, on which the flowers bloom, across which the beasts roam, out of which the worm creeps. 2. Of his *essential frailty.* Being composed of little particles of dust, held together by what science calls "organisation," but Holy Writ designates the power of God, it requires but the loosening of God's hand, as it were, for the framework of his body, so wondrously fashioned, so delicately carved, so finely articulated, so firmly knit, to resolve itself into a heap of dust. 3. Of his *final destiny.* Every mundane thing returns to the place whence it proceeded (Eccles. i. 5, 7). The vapours climb into the sky, but descend again upon the hills, and seek the plains. The flowers bloom, but, after dispensing their fragrance, shed their leaves upon the earth. The young lions, that, as it were, are sprung from the soil, find a grave at last within their forest dens. As it is with the flowers and the beasts, so is it also with man. "All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Eccles. iii. 18, 20; Job x. 9; Ps. ciii. 14).

Lessons:—1. Humility of spirit (Job iv. 19; Ps. cxliv. 3, 4; Isa. li. 1). "Holy living" (Taylor, § iv. 9). 2. Care for the body—protecting its frailty from injury (Levit. xix. 28) and its materiality from mastery (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 4). 3. Preparation for death (Ps. xxxix. 4; xc. 12).

II. Fashioned by the hand of God. Made from the dust, the first man neither sprung from the slime of matter, according to naturalism (οἱ αὐτόχθονες), nor was evolved from the τὸ πᾶν of pantheism, but was specifically formed by Divine creative power. This marked the first degree of man's superiority over other living creatures. Deriving existence, equally with man, from the creative power of God, it is not said of them that they were "formed" by God. Let this remind man—1. Of *the Divine origin of the body.* If the physical structures of the lower organisms display such admirable proportions and striking adaptations as to evince the action of Divine intelligence, much more may a Creator's hand be recognised

in the form and symmetry, proportion and adjustment of the human body. An examination of the hand, eye, or brain, of the muscular or nervous systems, instinctively awakens the devout feelings of the Psalmist: "I will praise Thee, O Lord; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. cxxxix. 14). 2. Of *the Divine estimate of the body*. Shown by the personal care and attention which God devoted to its construction, since he designed it to be the noblest of his works, the shrine of an immortal spirit, a prophecy and type of the body of his Son, in the fulness of the times to be prepared by another special act of creation (Ps. xl. 6; Heb. x. 8). This estimate he has in many ways confirmed: by abundantly and generously sustaining it, although a partner in the spirit's sin (Gen. i. 29; ix. 3); guarding its life with the strictest and severest penalties (Gen. ix. 5, 6); taking it into union with himself, in the person of his Son (Heb. ii. 6); redeeming it, as well as the soul it enshrines, through his Son's blood (Rom. viii. 21, 23); and constituting it, as well as the immaterial spirit, a partaker of resurrection glory (1 Cor. xv. 42).

Learn—1. The true nobility of man's descent, and the duty of walking **worthy** of it. 2. The high value of the body, and the consequent obligation of neither dishonouring nor abusing it.

III. Animated by the breath of life. The second degree of man's superiority to the lower animals. Like them, a living soul, his life is different from theirs—1. *In its nature*. Theirs was a portion of that common life principle which God has been pleased to communicate to matter; his a direct afflatus from the personality of God. 2. *In its impartation*. Theirs was bestowed directly and immediately by the fiat of omnipotence; his conveyed into his material framework by a special Divine operation. 3. *In its effect*. Theirs constituted them "living souls;" his conferred on him personality. Theirs made them creatures having life; his caused him to become a spirit having life. Theirs left them wholly mortal; his transformed him into an immortal (Eccles. iii. 21).

Let man consider—1. That his body is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19). 2. That his spirit is the creation and the gift of God (Eccles. xii. 7; Isa. lvii. 16; Zech. xii. 1). 3. That with both it becomes him to glorify his Divine Creator (1 Cor. vi. 20).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 4—7.—*Man the living soul.* 1. Life is a Divine bestowment. 2. Dust which is Divinely inspired is no longer mere dust; the true life is neither grovelling on the earth, nor so much away from the earth as to be no longer the life of a living soul. 3. The creature who is last formed, and for whom all other things wait and are prepared, is made to be the interpreter of all, and the glory of God in them.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 8.—In accordance with a well-known characteristic of Hebrew composition, the writer, having carried his subject forward to a convenient place of rest, now reverts to a point of time in the six days antecedent to man's appearance on the earth. In anticipation of his arrival, it was needful that a suitable abode should be prepared for his reception. Accordingly, having already mentioned the creation of plants, trees, and flowers, the narrative proceeds to describe the construction of Adam's early home. **And the Lord God** (Jehovah Elohim) **planted**—*i. e.* specially prepared—**a garden** (*gan*, a place protected by a fence, from *ganan*, to cover; hence a garden: cf. Deut. ii. 10; 1 Kings xxi. 2; Isa. li. 8; LXX., *παράδεισος*; Vulgate, *paradisus;* whence English, paradise, Luke xxiii. 43) **eastward** (*mekedem*, literally, from the front quarter, not from the beginning,—*ἀπο ἀρχῆς*, Aquila; *ἐν πρώτοις*, Theodotion; *a principio*, Vulgate,—but in the region lying towards the east of Palestine—LXX., *κατ' ἀνατολάς*) **in** (not *of*, as Murphy, who renders "in the east of Eden") **Eden** (delight; Greek, *ἡδονή*: cf. Hedenesh, or Heden, the birthplace of Zoroaster—Kalisch). The word is not merely descriptive of the beauty and fertility of the garden (*paradisus voluptatis*, Vulg., cf. *παράδεισος της τρυφης*, LXX. (Joel ii. 3). On the ground of possessing similar qualities, other districts and places were subsequently termed Edens: cf. 2 Kings xix. 12; Isa. xxxvii. 12; li. 3; Ezek. xxvii. 23; Amos i. 5), but likewise indicates its locality, which

is afterwards more exactly defined (vers. 10, 14). In the mean time it is simply noted that, this enchanting paradise having been specially prepared by Jehovah, **there he put the man** (Adam) **whom he had formed.**

Ver. 9.—**And out of the ground made the Lord God** (Jehovah Elohim) **to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight**—literally, lovely to see; *i. e.* beautiful in form and colour—**and good for food.** In the preparation of man's pristine abode respect was had to ornamentation as well as utility. Every species of vegetation that could minister to his corporeal necessities was provided. Flowers, trees, and shrubs regaled his senses with their fragrance, pleased his eye with their exquisite forms and enchanting colours, and gratified his palate with their luscious fruits. Hence the garden of the Lord became the highest ideal of earthly excellence (Isa. li. 3). In particular it was distinguished by the presence of two trees, which occupied a central position among its multifarious productions. **The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.** That these were not two separate trees, but only one tree distinguished by different names, has been maintained, though with no weightier reason than the statement of Eve in ch. iii. 3. The opinion of Witsius, Luther, Kennicott, and Hengstenberg, that classes of trees, and not individual trees, are meant by the phrases "tree of life" and "tree of knowledge," is precluded by the language of Jehovah Elohim in ch. ii. 17 and ch. iii. 24. As regards their significance, consistency requires that they should both be explained on the same principle. This, accordingly, disposes of the idea that the tree of life (literally, the tree of the lives: cf. ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς, Rev. ii. 7; xx. 19) is simply a Hebraism for *a living tree*, as by no sort of ingenuity can the tree of knowledge be transformed into *a knowing tree.* It likewise militates against the notion that the two trees were styled from the peculiar effects of their fruits, the one conferring physical immortality on Adam's body (Scotus, Aquinas, Fairbairn, Kalisch, Luther), and the other imparting moral and intellectual intuitions to his soul (Josephus, Kalisch). But even if the life-giving properties of the one tree could be demonstrated from ch. iii. 24, proof would still be required with regard to the other, that the mere physical processes of manducation and digestion could be followed by results so immaterial as those of "rousing the slumbering intellect, teaching reason to reflect, and enabling the judgment to distinguish between moral good and moral evil" (Kalisch). Besides, if this was the immediate effect of eating the forbidden fruit, it is difficult to perceive either why it should have been prohibited to our first parents at all, it being "for their good to have their wits sharpened" (Willet); or in what respect they suffered loss through listening to the tempter, and did not rather gain (Rabbi Moses); or wherein, being destitute of both intellectual and moral discernment, they could be regarded as either guilty of transgression or responsible for obedience. Incapacity to know good and evil may be a characteristic of unconscious childhood and unreflecting youth (Deut. i. 39; Isa. vii. 15; Jonah iv. 11), or of debilitated age (2 Sam. xix. 36), but is not conceivable in the case of one who was created in God's image, invested with world-dominion, and himself constituted the subject of moral government. Unless, therefore, with ancient Gnostics and modern Hegelians, we view the entire story of the probation as an allegorical representation of the necessary intellectual and ethical development of human nature, we must believe that Adam was acquainted with the idea of moral distinctions from the first. Hence the conclusion seems to force itself upon our minds that the first man was possessed of both immortality and knowledge irrespective altogether of the trees, and that the true character which belonged to these trees was symbolical or sacramental, suggestive of the conditions under which he was placed in Eden. "Arbori autem vitæ nomen indidit, non quod vitam homini conferret, qua jam ante præditus erat; sed ut symbolum ac memoriale esset vitæ divinitus acceptæ" (Calvin). For a further exposition of the exact significance of these trees see below on vers. 16, 17.

Ver. 10.—The precise locality of Eden is indicated by its relation to the great water-courses of the region. **And a river** (literally, a flowing water, applicable to large oceanic floods—Job xxii. 16; Ps. xxiv. 2; xlvi. 5; Jonah ii. 4—as well as to narrow streams) **went out** (literally, going out) **of Eden to water the garden.** To conclude from this that the river had its source within the limits of the garden is to infer more than the premises will warrant. Nothing more is implied in the language than that a great water-course proceeded through the district of Eden, and served to irrigate the soil. Probably it intersected the garden, thus occasioning its remarkable fecundity and beauty. **And from thence** (*i. e.* either on emerging from which, or, taking מִן in its secondary sense, outside of, or at a distance from which) **it was parted** (literally, divided itself), **and became into four heads.** *Roshim*, from *rosh*, that which is highest; either principal waters, arms or branches (Tayler Lewis, Alford), or beginnings of rivers, indicating the sources of the streams (Gesenius, Keil, Macdonald, Murphy). If the second of these interpretations be adopted, Eden must be looked for

in a spot where some great flowing water is subdivided into four separate streams; if the former be regarded as the proper exegesis, then any great river which is first formed by the junction of two streams, and afterwards disperses its waters in two different directions, will meet the requirements of the case.

Vers. 11, 12.—**The name of the first** (river is) **Pishon**, or "the full-flowing." This is the first of those marks by which the river, when discovered, must be identified. It was palpably a broad-bosomed stream. A second is derived from the region through which it flows. **That is it which compasseth** (not necessarily surrounding, but skirting in a circular or circuitous fashion—Num. xxi. 4; Judges xi. 8) **the whole land of Havilah.** Havilah itself is described by three of its productions. **Where there is gold.** *I. e.* it is a gold-producing country. **And the gold of that land is good.** Of the purest quality and largest quantity. **There also is bdellium.** Literally *bedolach*, which the manna was declared to resemble (Exod. xvii. 14; Num. xi. 7). The LXX., supposing it to be a precious stone, translate it by ἄνθραξ in the present passage, and by κρυστάλλος in Num. xi. 7—a view supported by the Jewish Rabbis and Gesenius. The majority of modern interpreters espouse the opinion of Josephus, that it was an odorous and costly gum indigenous to India, Arabia, Babylonia, and Bactriana. The third production is **the onyx** (*shoham*, from a root signifying to be pale or delicate in colour, like the finger-nails), variously conjectured to be the beryl, onyx, sardonyx, sardius, or emerald. From this description it appears that Havilah must be sought for among the gold-producing countries of Asia. Now among the sons of Joktan or primitive Arabs (Gen. x. 29)—"whose dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest, unto Sephar, a mount of the east"—are Ophir and Havilah, whence Gesenius concludes that India, including Arabia, is meant. Other countries have their advocates, such as Arabia Felix, Susiana, Colchis, &c.; and other rivers, such as the Ganges (Josephus, Eusebius), the Phasis (Reland, Jahn, Rosenmüller, Winer), the Indus (Schulthess, Kalisch).

Ver. 13.—**And the name of the second is the Gihon**, or "the bursting," from גִּיחַ, to break forth. "Deep-flowing," T. Lewis renders it, connecting it with ὠκεανός, and identifying it with Homer's βαθυῤῥόος Ὠκεανός. **The same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia** (Cush). Under the impression that the African Cush was meant, the Alexandrine Jews discovered the Gihon in the Nile — an opinion in which they have been followed by Schulthess, Gesenius, Fürst, Bertheau, Kalisch, and others. But Cush, it is now known, describes the entire region between Arabia and the Nile, and in particular the southern district of the former lying between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Hence Tayler Lewis finds the Gihon in the occan water sweeping round the south coast of Arabia. Murphy detects the name Kush in the words Caucasus and Caspian, and, looking for the site of Eden about the sources of the Euphrates and the Tigris in Armenia, thinks the Gihon may have been the leading stream flowing into the Caspian. Delitzsch advocates the claim of the Araxis to be this river.

Ver. 14.—**And the name of the third river is the Hiddekel**, or "the darting," from חַד and קַל, a sharp and swift arrow, referring to its rapidity. It is unanimously agreed that this must be identified with the Tigris; in the present language of the Persians designated *tir*, which signifies an arrow. It is styled in Aramaic *diglath* or *diglah*. **That is it which goeth towards the east of Assyria.** Its identity is thus placed beyond a question. **And the fourth** river is **Euphrates**, or "the sweet," from an unused root, *parath*, signifying to be sweet, referring to the sweet and pleasant taste of its waters (Jer. ii. 18). Further description of this great water was unnecessary, being universally known to the Hebrews as "the great river" (Deut. i. 7; Dan. x. 4), and "the river" *par excellence* (Exod. xxiii. 31; Isa. vii. 20). The river still bears its early name. In the cuneiform inscriptions deciphered by Rawlinson it is called "Ufrata." Recurring now to the site of Eden, it must be admitted that, notwithstanding this description, the whole question is involved in uncertainty. The two solutions of the problem that have the greatest claim on our attention are, (1) that which places Eden near the head of the Persian Gulf, and (2) that which looks for it in Armenia. The latter is favoured by the close proximity to that region of the sources of both the Euphrates and the Tigris; but, on the other hand, it is hampered by the difficulty of discovering other two rivers that will correspond with the Gihon and the Pison, and the almost certainty that Cush and Havilah are to be sought for in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf. The former (Calvin, Kalisch, T. Lewis) is supported by this last consideration, that Cush and Havilah are not remote from the locality, though it too has its incumbrances. It seems to reverse the idea of יָצָא, which according to Le Clerc indicates the direction of the stream. Then its advocates, no more than the supporters of the alternate theory, are agreed upon the Gihon and the Pison: Calvin finding them in the two principal mouths of the Euphrates and the Tigris, which Sir Charles Lyell declares to be of comparatively recent formation; Kalisch indentifying them with

the Indus and the Nile; and Tayler Lewis regarding them as the two sides of the Persian Gulf. Sir H. Rawlinson, from a study of the Assyrian texts, has pointed out the coincidence of the Babylonian region of Karduniyas or Garduniyas with the Eden of the Bible; and the late George Smith finds in its four rivers, Euphrates, Tigris, Surappi, and Ukui, its known fertility, and its name, Gandunu, so similar to Gan-eden (the garden of Eden), "considerations all tending towards the view that it is the paradise of Genesis" ('Chald. Gen.,' pp. 3—305).

Ver. 15.—Having prepared the garden for man's reception, **the Lord God took the man.** "Not physically lifting him up and putting him down in the garden, but simply exerting an influence upon him which induced him, in the exercise of his free agency, to go. He went in consequence of a secret impulse or an open command of his Maker" (Bush). **And put him into the garden**; literally, caused him to rest in it as an abode of happiness and peace. **To dress it.** *I. e.* to till, cultivate, and work it. This would almost seem to hint that the *aurea ætas* of classical poetry was but a dream—a reminiscence of Eden, perhaps, but idealised. Even the plants, flowers, and trees of Eden stood in need of cultivation from the hand of man, and would speedily have degenerated without his attention. **And to keep it.** Neither were the animals all so peaceful and domesticated that Adam did not need to fence his garden against their depredations. Doubtless there is here too an ominous hint of the existence of that greater adversary against whom he was appointed to watch.

Vers. 16, 17.—**And Jehovah Elohim commanded the man** (Adam), **saying.** Whether or not these were the first words listened to by man (Murphy), they clearly presuppose the person to whom they were addressed to have had the power of understanding language, *i. e.* of interpreting vocal sounds, and representing to his own mind the conceptions or ideas of which they were the signs, a degree of intellectual development altogether incompatible with modern evolution theories. They likewise assume the pre-existence of a moral nature which could recognise the distinction between "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." **Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat**; literally, eating, thou shalt eat. Adam, it thus appears, was permitted to partake of the tree of life; not, however, as a means of either conferring or preserving immortality, which was already his by Divine gift, and the only method of conserving which recognised by the narrative was abstaining from the tree of knowledge; but as a symbol and guarantee of that immortality with which he had been endowed, and which would continue to be his so long as he maintained his personal integrity. This, of course, by the very terms of his existence, he was under obligation to do, apart altogether from any specific enactment which God might enjoin. As a moral being, he had the law written on his conscience. But, as if to give a visible embodiment to that law, and at the same time to test his allegiance to his Maker's will, which is the kernel of all true obedience, an injunction was laid upon him of a positive description—**But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.** Speculations as to what kind of tree it was, whether a vine, a fig, or an apple tree, are more curious than profitable. There is no reason to suppose that any noxious or lethiferous properties resided in its fruit. The death that was to follow on transgression was to spring from the *eating*, and not from the *fruit*; from the sinful act, and not from the creature, which in itself was good. The prohibition laid on Adam was for the time being a summary of the Divine law. Hence the tree was a sign and symbol of what that law required. And in this, doubtless, lies the explanation of its name. It was a concrete representation of that fundamental distinction between right and wrong, duty and sin, which lies at the basis of all responsibility. It interpreted for the first pair those great moral intuitions which had been implanted in their natures, and by which it was intended they should regulate their lives. Thus it was for them a tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It brought out that knowledge which they already possessed into the clear light of definite conviction and precept, connecting it at the same time with the Divine will as its source and with themselves as its end. Further, it was an intelligible declaration of the duty which that knowledge of good and evil imposed upon them. Through its penalty it likewise indicated both the good which would be reaped by obedience and the evil which would follow on transgression. **For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**; literally, dying, thou shalt die. That this involved death physical, or the dissolution of the body, is indicated by the sentence pronounced on Adam after he had fallen (ch. iii. 19). That the sentence was not immediately executed does not disprove its reality. It only suggests that its suspension may have been due to some Divine interposition. Yet universal experience attests that permanent escape from its execution is impossible. In the case of Adam it was thus far put in force on the instant, that henceforth he ceased to be immortal. As prior to his fall his immortality was sure, being authenticated for him by the tree of life, so now, subsequent to that catastrophe, his mortality was certain. This, more than immediateness, is what the language implies. For the complete theological significance of this penalty see ch. iii. 19.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 8.—*The garden of Eden.* I. A SCENE OF BEAUTY. Whether situated in Armenia or Babylonia (see Exposition), it was a fair spot in a sunny region of delights (Eden). This beauty was—1. *Luxuriant.* Milton has lavished all the wealth of his creative genius in an attempt to depict "the happy rural seat of the first pair" ('Par. Lost,' bk. iv.). Yet it is questionable if even he has succeeded in reproducing the gorgeous spectacle, the endlessly diversified assortment of lovely forms and radiant colours that seemed to compress "in narrow room nature's whole wealth," entitling Eden to be characterised as "a heaven on earth." 2. *Divinely prepared.* Jehovah Elohim caused it to spring up and bloom before the wondering eye of man. All the world's beauty is of God. The flowers and the herbs and the trees have all their symmetry and loveliness from him. God clothes the lilies of the field; the raiment, outshining the glory of royal Solomon, in which they are decked is of his making. If nature be the loom in which it is woven, he is the all-wise ὑφάντης or Weaver by whom its wondrous mechanism is guided and energised. Let us rejoice in the earth's beauty, and thank God for it. 3. *Exceptional.* We are scarcely warranted, even by ch. iii. 17, to suppose that, prior to the fall, the whole world was a paradise. Rather, geologic revelations give us reason to believe that from the first the earth was prepared for the reception of a sinful race, death and deformity having been in the world anterior to man's arrival upon the scene (cf. Bushnell, 'Nat. and Super.,' ch. vii.), and that the Edenic home was what the Bible says it was—a fair spot, specially planted and fenced about, for the temporary residence of the innocent pair, who were ultimately, as transgressors, to be driven forth to dwell upon a soil which was cursed because of sin. Let it humble us to think that the earth is not a paradise solely because of human sin. 4. *Prophetic.* Besides being a picture of what the world would have been, had it been prepared for a sinless race, it was also a foreshadowing of the renovated earth when sin shall be no more, when "this land that was desolate shall have become like the garden of Eden." Let it stimulate our hope and assist our faith to anticipate the *palingenesia* of the future, when this sterile and disordered world shall be refitted with bloom and beauty.

II. A SPHERE OF WORK. Adam's work was—1. *God-assigned.* So in a very real sense is every man's life occupation appointed by God. "To every man his work" is the law of God's world as well as of Christ's kingdom. This thought should dignify "the trivial round, the common task," and enable us, "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God." 2. *Pleasant.* And so should all work be, whether arduous or easy, especially to a Christian. To be sure, Adam's work was light and easy in comparison with that which afterwards became his lot, and that which now constitutes ours. But even these would be joyous and exhilarating if performed by the free spirit of love, instead of, as they often are, by the unwilling hands of bondmen. 3. *Necessary.* Even in a state of innocence it was impossible that man could be suffered to live in indolence; his endowments and capacities were fitted for activity. His happiness and safety (against temptation) required him to be employed. And if God who made him was ever working, why should he be idle? The same arguments forbid idleness to-day. Christianity with emphasis condemns it. "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat."

III. AN ABODE OF INNOCENCE. This abode was—1. *Suitable.* It was not suitable for sinners, just as the world outside would not have been adapted for a pair who were sinless; but it was peculiarly appropriate for their innocence. He who appointeth to all men the bounds of their habitation always locates men in spheres that are exactly suited to their natures and needs. 2. *Provisional.* Their possession of it was contingent on their remaining sinless. If their souls continued pure, their homes would continue fair. It is man's own sin that defaces the beauty and mars the happiness of man's home. When men find themselves in positions that are not compatible with their happiness and usefulness, it is sin that has placed them there. 3. *Quickly lost.* How long they continued innocent is useless to conjecture, though probably it was not long. More important is it to observe that not much was

required to deprive them of their lovely home—one act of disobedience! See the danger of even one sin. 4. *Ultimately recoverable.* This truth was taught by the stationing of the cherubim at its gate (*q. v.*). Rev. xxii. 1 tells us it has been regained for us by Christ, and will in the end be bestowed on us.

IV. A HOME OF HAPPINESS. 1. Everything was absent that might mar man's felicity. No sin, no error, no sorrow. 2. Everything was present that could minister to his enjoyment. There was ample gratification for all the different parts of his complex nature. (1) For his bodily senses, the fair scenes, melodious sounds, crystal streams, and luscious fruits of the garden. (2) For his mental powers, the study of the works of God. (3) For his social affections, a loving and lovely partner. (4) For his spiritual nature, God. To reproduce the happiness of Eden, so far as that is possible in a sinful world, there is needed (*a*) communion with a gracious God; (*b*) the felicity of a loving and a pious home; (*c*) the joy of life—physical, intellectual, moral.

V. A PLACE OF PROBATION. This probation was—1. *Necessary.* Virtue that stands only because it has never been assaulted is, to say the least of it, not of the highest kind. Unless man had been subjected to trial it might have remained dubious whether he obeyed of free choice or from mechanical necessity. 2. *Easy.* The specific commandment which Adam was required to observe was not severe in its terms. The limitations it prescribed were of the smallest possible description—abstinence from only one tree. 3. *Gracious.* Instead of perilling the immortality of Adam and his posterity upon every single act of their lives, he suspended it upon the observance, doubtless for only a short space of time, of one easily-obeyed precept, which he had the strongest possible inducement to obey. If he maintained his integrity, not only would his own holiness and happiness be confirmed, but those of his descendants would be secured; while if he failed, he would involve not himself alone, but all succeeding generations in the sweep of a terrific penalty. The clearness with which that penalty was made known, the certainty of its execution, and the severity of its inflictions, were proofs of the grace of God towards his creature man.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 8—17.—*Man's first dwelling-place.* The description of Eden commences an entirely new stage in the record. We are now entering upon the history of humanity as such.

I. The first fact in that history is a state of "PLEASANTNESS." The garden is planted by God. The trees are adapted to human life, to support it, to gratify it; and in the midst of the garden the two trees which represent the two most important facts with which revelation is about to deal, viz., immortality and sin.

II. OUTSPREAD BLESSING. The RIVER breaks into four fountains, whose description carries us over enormous regions of the world. It is the river which went out of Eden to water the garden; so that the conception before us is that of an abode of man specially prepared of God, not identical with Eden in extent, but in character; and the picture is carried out, as it were, by the channels of the outflowing streams, which bear the Eden life with them over the surface of the earth, so that the general effect of the whole is a *prophecy of blessing*, Eden-like beauty, and pleasantness, *over the whole extent of the world.*

III. THE PREPARED GARDEN WAITED FOR ITS INHABITANT. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden" (literally, made him to rest in the garden) "to dress it and to keep it." Perhaps the simplest view of these words is the most significant. Man is led into a life of pleasantness, with only such demands upon him as it will be no burden to meet; and in that life of pure happiness and free activity he is made conscious, not of mere dependence upon his Creator for existence, not of laws hanging over him like threatening swords, but of a Divine commandment which at once gave liberty and restrained it, which surrounded the one tree of knowledge of good and evil with its circle of prohibition, not as an arbitrary test of obedience, but as a Divine proclamation of eternal righteousness. "Evil is death."

"Thou shalt not eat of it," for this reason, that "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It is not a subjection of a new-made creature to a test. It would be a harsh demand to make of Adam, unless he understood that it was founded on the nature of things.

IV. The tree of life and the tree of death stand together in the midst of the garden. They hold the same position still in every sphere of human existence. But the book of Divine grace, as it teaches us how the sin-stricken, dying world is restored to a paradise of Divine blessedness, reveals at the last, in the vision of the Christian seer, only the *tree of life* beside *the water of life;* the evil cast out, and the death which it brought with it, and the new-made inhabitants "*taking freely*" of "the pleasures which are for evermore."—R.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The tree of life and the water of life.* These two features of Eden claim special attention.

I. Their recurrence in Scripture. They link the paradise of unfallen man to that of redeemed man. Actual channels of life and blessing, they were also figures of that salvation which the history of the world was gradually to unfold. But sin came, and death; present possession was lost. What remained was the promise of a Saviour. We pass over much of preparation for his coming: the selection of a people; the care of God for his vineyard; the ordinances and services foreshadowing the gospel. Then a time of trouble: Jerusalem a desolation; the people in captivity; the temple destroyed; the ark gone; sacrifices at an end. "Where is now thy God?" Where thy hope? Such the state of the world when a vision given to Ezekiel (Ezek. xlvii. 1—12), reproducing the imagery of Eden, but adapted to the need of fallen man. Again we have the stream; now specially to heal. Its source the mercy-seat (comp. Ezek. xliii. 1—7; xlvii. 1; Rev. xxii. 1). And the trees; not different from the tree of life (Ezek. xlvii. 12: "*It* shall bring forth new fruit"); varied manifestations of grace; for food and for medicine. But observe, the vision is of a coming dispensation. Again a space. Our Saviour's earthly ministry over. The Church is struggling on. The work committed to weak hands; the treasure in earthen vessels. But before the volume of revelation closed, the same symbols are shown in vision to St. John (Rev. xxii. 1, 2). The "river of water of life" (cf. "living water," John iv. 10), and the tree whose fruit and leaves are for food and healing. Meanwhile our Lord had said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." A link to connect this with Gen. ii. is Rev. ii. 7 (cf. also Rev. xii. 11). And again, the word used for "tree" in all these passages is that used for the cross in Gal. iii. 13 and 1 Pet. ii. 24.

II. Their spiritual significance. The tree with its fruit and leaves are the manifestation of Christ to the soul—to sinners pardon, to the weak support and guidance, to saints communion. And the stream is the gospel (the four-parted river in Eden has been likened to the four Gospels), spreading throughout the world, bringing healing, light, and life; enabling men to rejoice in hope. But mark, the drops of which that stream is composed are living men. The gospel spreads from heart to heart, and from lip to lip (cf. John vii. 38). Forming part of that healing flood are preachers of the gospel in every place and way; and thinkers contending for the faith; and men mighty in prayer; and those whose loving, useful lives set forth Christ; and the sick silently preaching patience; and the child in his little ministry. There is helping work for all. The Lord hath need of all. To each one the question comes, Art thou part of that stream? Hast thou realised the stream of mercy, the gift of salvation for thine own need? And canst thou look at the many still unhealed and be content to do nothing? Thou couldst not cause the stream to flow; but it is thine to press the "living water" upon others, to help to save others. Art thou doing this? Is there not within the circle of thy daily life some one in grief whom Christian sympathy may help, some anxious one whom a word of faith may strengthen, some undecided one who may be influenced? There is thy work. Let the reality of Christ's gift and his charge to thee so fill thy heart that real longing may lead to earnest prayer; then a way will be opened.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 18.—In anticipation of the ensuing narrative of the temptation and the fall, the historian, having depicted man's settlement in Eden, advances to complete his *dramatis personæ* by the introduction upon the scene of the animals and woman. In the preliminary creation record (i. 27) it is simply stated that God created man, male and female; there is a complete absence of details as to the Divine *modus operandi* in the execution of these, his last and greatest works. It is one object, among others, of the second portion of the history to supply those details. With regard to man (Adam), an account of his formation, at once minute and exhaustive, has been given in the preceding verses (7—17); now, with like attention to antecedent and concomitant circumstances and events, the sacred penman adds a description of the time, reason, manner, and result of the formation of woman. **And the Lord God said, It is not good for man to be alone.** While the animals were produced either in swarms (as the fishes) or in pairs (as the birds and beasts), man was created as an individual; his partner, by a subsequent operation of creative power, being produced from himself. With the wild phantasies and gross speculations of some theosophists, as to whether, prior to the creation of Eve, Adam was androgynic (Bohme), or simply *vir in potentia*, out of which state he passed the moment the woman stood by his side (Ziegler), a devout exegesis is not required to intermeddle. Neither is it needful to wonder how God should pronounce that to be not good which he had previously (i. 31) affirmed was good. The Divine judgment of which the preceding chapter speaks was expressed at the completion of man's creation; this, while that creation was in progress. For the new-made man to have been left without a partner would, in the estimation of Jehovah Elohim, have been for him a condition of being which, if not necessarily bad in itself, yet, considering his intellectual and social nature, "would eventually have passed over from the negative not good, or a manifest want, into the positive not good, or a hurtful impropriety" (Lange). "It was not good for man to be alone; not, as certain foolish Rabbis conceited, lest he should imagine himself to be the lord of the world, or as though no man could live without a woman, which is contrary to Scripture; but in respect of (1) mutual society and comfort, (2) the propagation of the race, (3) the increase and generation of the Church of God, and (4) the promised seed of the woman (Willet). Accordingly, Jehovah Elohim, for whom (seeing that his nature is to dispense happiness to his creatures) no more than for Adam would it have been good that man, being what he was, should remain alone, said, **I will provide a help meet for him**; literally, an helper, as over against him, *i. e.* corresponding to him, *βοηθὸν κατ' αὐτόν*; ver. 20, *ὅμοιος αὐτῷ*, LXX. The expression indicates that the forthcoming helper was to be of similar nature to the man himself, corresponding by way of supplement to the incompleteness of his lonely being, and in every way adapted to be his co-partner and companion. All that Adam's nature demanded for its completion, physically, intellectually, socially, was to be included in this *altera ego* who was soon to stand by his side. Thus in man's need, and woman's power to satisfy that need, is laid the foundation for the Divine institution of marriage, which was afterwards prescribed not for the first pair alone, but for all their posterity.

Ver. 19.—**And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.** To allege that the Creator's purpose to provide a helpmeet for Adam seeks realisation through the production of the animals (Kalisch, Alford) proceeds upon a misapprehension of the proper *nexus* which binds the thoughts of the historian, and a want of attention to the peculiar structure of Hebrew composition, besides exhibiting Jehovah Elohim in the character of an empiric who only tentatively discovers the sort of partner that is suitable for man. It is not the time, but simply the fact, of the creation of the animals that the historian records. The *Vav.* consec. does not necessarily involve time-succession, but is frequently employed to indicate thought-sequence (cf. ii. 8; 1 Kings ii. 13, &c.). The verb (pret.) may also quite legitimately be rendered "had formed" (Bush). "Our modern style of expressing the Semitic writer's thought would be this—'And God brought to Adam the beasts which he had formed'" (Delitzsch). It is thus unnecessary to defend the record from a charge of inconsistency with the previous section, by supposing this to be the account of a second creation of animals in the district of Eden. Another so-called contradiction, that the present narrative takes no account of the creation of aquatic animals, is disposed of by observing that the writer only notices that those animals which were brought to Adam had been previously formed by God from the ground, and were thus in the line of the onward evolutions of the heavens and the earth which led up to man. As to why the fishes

were not brought into the garden, if other reason is required besides that of physical impossibility, the ingenuity of Keil suggests that these were not so nearly related to Adam as the fowls and the beasts, which, besides, were the animals specially ordained for his service. **And brought** them (literally, brought; not necessarily all the animals in Eden, but specimens of them) **unto Adam.** We agree with Willet in believing that "neither did Adam gather together the cattle as a shepherd doth his sheep, nor did the angels muster them, nor the animals come themselves, and, passing by, while he sat on some elevation, bow their heads at his resplendent appearance; nor were Adam's eyes so illuminate that he beheld them all in their places—all which," says he, "are but men's conceits;" but that through the secret influence of God upon their natures they were assembled round the inmate of paradise, as afterwards they were collected in the ark. The reasons for this particular action on the part of God were manifold; one of them being stated in the words which follow—**to see what he would call them**; literally, to them. Already man had received from God his first lesson in the exercise of speech, in the naming of the trees and the imposition of the prohibition. This was his second—the opportunity afforded him of using for himself that gift of language and reason with which he had been endowed. In this it is implied that man was created with the faculty of speech, the distinct gift of articulate and rational utterance, and the capacity of attaching words to ideas, though it also seems to infer that the evolution of a language was for him, as it is for the individual yet, a matter of gradual development. Another reason was to manifest his sovereignty or lordship over the inferior creation. **And whatsoever Adam** (literally, the man) **called every living creature** (*i. e.* that was brought to him), **that was the name thereof.** That is to say, it not only met the Divine approbation as exactly suitable to the nature of the creature, and thus was a striking attestation of the intelligence and wisdom of the first man, but it likewise adhered to the creature as a name which had been assigned by its master.

Ver. 20.—**And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.** The portrait here delineated of the first man is something widely different from that of an infantile savage slowly groping his way towards the possession of articulate speech and intelligible language by imitation of the sounds of animals. Speech and language both spring full-formed, though not completely matured, from the *primus homo* of the Bible. As to the names that Adam gave the animals, with Calvin we need not doubt that they were founded on the best of reasons, though what they were it is impossible to discover, as it is not absolutely certain that Adam spoke in Hebrew. **But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.** This was the chief reason for assembling the creatures. It was meant to reveal his loneliness. The longing for a partner was already deeply seated in his nature, and the survey of the animals, coming to him probably in pairs, could not fail to intensify that secret hunger of his soul, and perhaps evoke it into conscious operation.

Ver. 21.—**And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept.** This was clearly not a sleep of weariness or fatigue, in consequence of arduous labours undergone, but a supernatural slumber, which, however, may have been superinduced upon the natural condition of repose. Lightfoot, following the LXX., who translate *tardemah* (deep sleep) by *ecstasy*, *ἔκστασις*, imagines that the whole scene of Eve's creation was presented to Adam's imagination in a Divinely-inspired dream, which has at least the countenance of Job iv. 13 Such a supposition, however, is not required to account for Adam's recognition of his bride. There is more of aptness in the observation of Lange, that in the deep sleep of Adam we have an echo of the creative evenings that preceded the Divine activity. "Everything out of which some new thing is to come sinks down before the event into such a deep sleep," is the far-seeing and comprehensive remark of Ziegler. **And he took one of his ribs** (*tsela* = something bent, from *tsala*, to incline; hence a rib), **and closed up the flesh** (literally, flesh) **instead thereof.** Whether Adam was created with a superfluous rib, or his body was mutilated by the abstraction of a rib, is a question for the curious. In the first, Calvin finds nothing "which is not in accordance with Divine providence," while he favours the latter conjecture, and thinks that Adam got a rich compensation—"quum se integrum vidit in uxore, qui prius tantum dimidius erat." Luther inclines to think that Adam's language in ver. 23 implies that not the bare rib, but the rib with the accompanying flesh, was extracted.

Ver. 22.—**And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he** (literally, builded into; *ædificavit*, Vulgate; ᾠκοδόμησεν, LXX.) **a woman.** The peculiar phraseology employed to describe the formation of Adam's partner has been understood as referring to the physical configuration of woman's body, which is broadest towards the middle (Lyra); to the incompleteness of Adam's being, which was like an unfinished building until Eve was formed (Calvin); to the part of the female in building up the family (Delitzsch, Macdonald), to the building up of the Church, of which she was designed to be

a type (Bonar);—yet it may be doubted if there is not as much truth in the remark that "by the many words used in the generation of mankind, as *creating* (ch. i. 27), *making* (ch. i. 26), *forming* and *inspiring* (ch. ii. 7), and now *building*, Moses would set forth this wondrous workmanship for which the Psalmist so laudeth God," Ps. cxxxix. 14 (Ainsworth). **And brought her unto the man.** *I. e.* led, conducted, and presented her to Adam. "The word implies the solemn bestowment of her in the bonds of the marriage covenant, which is hence called the covenant of God (Prov. ii. 17); implying that he is the Author of this sacred institution" (Bush). On awaking from his slumber Adam at once recognised the Divine intention, and joyfully welcomed his bride.

Ver. 23.—**And Adam said.** Either as being possessed, while in a sinless state, of a power of intuitive perception which has been lost through the fall, or as speaking under Divine inspiration (*vide* Matt. xix. 4—6). **This now.** Literally, this tread, step, or stroke, meaning either this time, looking back to the previous review of the animal creation, as if he wished to say, At last one has come who is suitable to be my partner (Calvin); or, less probably, looking forward to the ordinary mode of woman's production, this time she is supernaturally formed (Bush). "The thrice repeated *this* is characteristic. It vividly points to the woman on whom, in joyful astonishment, the man's eye now rests with the full power of first love" (Delitzsch). Instinctively he recognises her relation to himself. **Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.** The language is expressive at once of woman's derivation from man (γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 12) and likeness to man. The first of these implies her subordination or subjection to man, or man's headship over woman (1 Cor. xi. 3), which Adam immediately proceeds to assert by assigning to her a name; the second is embodied in the name which she receives. **She** (literally, to this) **shall be called Woman** (*isha*, i. e. maness, from *ish*, man. Cf. Greek, ἀνδρίς (Symmachus), from ἀνήρ; Latin, *vir-ago*, *viræ* (old Latin), from *vir;* English, woman (wombman, Anglo-Saxon), from man; German, *männinn*, from *mann;* Sanscrit, *nari*, from *nara;* Ethiopic, *beesith*, from *beesi*), **because she** (this) **was taken from Man.** *Ish*, the name given by Adam to himself in contradistinction to his spouse, is interpreted as significant of man's authority (Gesenius), or of his social nature (Meier); but its exact etymology is involved in obscurity. Its relation to *Adham* is the same as that of *vir* to *homo* and ἀνήρ to ἄνθρωπος.

Ver. 24.—**Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.** There is nothing in the use of such terms as father and mother, or in the fact that the sentiment is prophetic, to prevent the words from being regarded as a continuation of Adam's speech, although, on the other hand, the statement of Christ (Matt. xix. 5) does not preclude the possibility of Moses being their author; but whether uttered by the first husband (Delitzsch, Macdonald) or by the historian (Calvin, Murphy), they must be viewed as an inspired declaration of the law of marriage. Its *basis* (fundamental reason and predisposing cause) they affirm to be (1) the original relationship of man and woman, on the platform of creation; and (2) the marriage union effected between the first pair. Its *nature* they explain to be (1) a forsaking (on the part of the woman as well as the man) of father and mother—not filially, in respect of duty, but locally, in respect of habitation, and comparatively, in respect of affection; and (2) a cleaving unto his wife, in a *conjugium corporis atque animæ*. Its *result* is stated in the words which follow: **and they shall be one flesh** (literally, into one flesh; εἰς σάρκα μίαν, Matt. xix. 5, LXX.). The language points to a unity of persons, and not simply to a conjunction of bodies, or a community of interests, or even a reciprocity of affections. Malachi (ch. ii. 15) and Christ (Matt. xix. 5) explain this verse as teaching the indissoluble character of marriage and condemning the practice of polygamy.

Ver. 25.—**And they were both naked.** Not partially (Pye Smith), but completely destitute of clothing. Diodorus Siculus and Plato both mention nakedness as a feature of the golden age and a characteristic of the first men (*vide* Rosenmüller, *Scholia in loco*). **The man and his wife.** The first pair of human beings are henceforth recognised in their relationship to one another as husband and wife. **And they were not ashamed.** Not because they were wholly uncultivated and their moral insight undeveloped (Knobel, Kalisch); but because their souls were arrayed in purity, and "their bodies were made holy through the spirit which animated them" (Keil). "They were naked, but yet they were not so. Their bodies were the clothing of their internal glory; and their internal glory was the clothing of their nakedness" (Delitzsch).

It is not surprising that the primeval history of mankind should have left its impress upon the current of tradition. The Assyrian tablets that relate to man are so fragmentary and mutilated that they can scarcely be rendered intelligible. So far as they have been deciphered, the first appears on its obverse side "to give the speech of the Deity to the newly-created pair (man and woman), instructing them in their

duties," in which can be detected a reference to something which is eaten by the stomach, to the duty of daily invocation of the Deity, to the danger of leaving God's fear, in which alone they can be holy, and to the propriety of trusting only a friend; and on its reverse what resembles a discourse to the first woman on her duties, in which occur the words, "With the lord of thy beauty thou shalt be faithful: to do evil thou shalt not approach him" ('Chaldean Genesis,' pp. 78—80). The Persian legend describes Meschia and Meschiane, the first parents of our race, as living in purity and innocence, and in the enjoyment of happiness which Ormuzd promised to render perpetual if they persevered in virtue. But Ahriman, an evil demon (Dev), suddenly appeared in the form of a serpent, and gave them of the fruit of a wonderful tree. The literature of the Hindoos distinguishes four ages of the world, in the first of which Justice, in the form of a bull, kept herself firm on her four feet; when Virtue reigned, no good which the mortals possessed was mixed with baseness, and man, free from disease, saw all his wishes accomplished, and attained an age of 400 years. The Chinese also have their age of happy men, living in abundance of food, and surrounded by the peaceful beasts ('Kalisch on Genesis,' p. 87). In the Zendavesta, Yima, the first Iranic king, lives in a secluded spot, where he and his people enjoy uninterrupted happiness, in a region free from sin, folly, violence, poverty, deformity. The Teutonic Eddas have a glimpse of the same truth in their magnificent drinking halls, glittering with burnished gold, where the primeval race enjoyed a life of perpetual festivity. Traces of a similar belief are found among the Thibetans, Mongolians, Cingalese, and others (Rawlinson's 'Hist. Illustrations of Scripture,' p. 10). The Western traditions are familiar to scholars in the pages of Hesiod, who speaks of the golden age when men were like the gods, free from labours, troubles, cares, and all evils in general; when the earth yielded her fruits spontaneously, and when men were beloved by the gods, with whom they held uninterrupted communion (Hesiod, 'Opera et Dies,' 90). And of Ovid, who adds to this picture the element of moral goodness as a characteristic of the *aurea ætas* ('Metam.,' i. 89). Macrobius ('Somn. Scipionis,' ii. 10) also depicts this period as one in which reigned *simplicitas mali nescia et adhuc astutiæ inexperta* (Macdonald, 'Creation and the Fall,' p. 147). "These coincidences affect the originality of the Hebrew writings as little as the frequent resemblance of Mosaic and heathen laws. They teach us that all such narratives have a common source; that they are reminiscences of primeval traditions modified by the different nations in accordance with their individual culture" (Kalisch).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 22.—*The first marriage.* I. THE LONELY MAN. 1. *Nobly born.* Sprung from the soil, yet descended from above. Fashioned of the dust, yet inspired by a celestial breath. Allied to the beasts, yet the offspring of God. 2. *Comfortably placed.* His native country a sunny region of delights (Eden, ch. ii. 8); his home a beautiful and fertile garden (ch. iii. 5); his supplies of the amplest possible description (ch. i. 30; ii. 16); his occupation light and pleasant (ch. ii. 15); his restrictions slight and trivial (ch. ii. 17); his privileges large (ch. ii. 16). 3. *Richly endowed.* With immortality (ch. ii. 17), intelligence (ch. ii. 19), social capacities and instincts (ch. ii. 18), the faculty of speech (ch. ii. 20). 4. *Highly exalted.* As God's offspring, he was invested with world-dominion (ch. i. 28; Ps. viii. 6), symbolised in his naming of the creatures (ch. ii. 20). Yet—5. *Essentially alone.* Not as entirely bereft of companionship, having on the one hand the society of Jehovah Elohim, and on the other the presence of the animals; but in neither the Creator nor the creatures could he find his other self—his counterpart and complement, his consort and companion. On the one hand Jehovah Elohim was too high, while on the other the creatures were too low, for such partnership as Adam's nature craved. And so Adam dwelt in solitude apart from both. "But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him."

II. THE PROVIDED PARTNER. 1. *Divinely fashioned* (ver. 22). (1) Woman was the last of God's creative works; presumably, therefore, she was the best. "Eve's being made after Adam puts an honour upon that sex as the glory of the man (1 Cor. xi. 7). If man is the head, she is the crown—a crown to her husband, the crown of the visible creation" (M. Henry). (2) Woman was not made till everything was in the highest state of readiness for her reception. Before her creation, not only must there be a home for her reception, provision for her maintenance, and servants

to attend upon her bidding; there must likewise be a husband that feels the need of her sweet society, that longs for her coming, and that can appreciate her worth. Hence he who seeks a partner should first find a house in which to lodge her, the means to support her, but specially the love wherewith to cherish her. (3) Woman was formed out of finer and more precious material than man, being constructed of a rib taken from his side. "The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double refined, one remove further from the earth" (M. Henry). This was not because of any supposed excellence residing in the matter of a human body. It was designed to indicate woman's unity with man as part of himself, and woman's claim upon man for affection and protection. She was made of a rib taken from his side—"not made out of his head, to rule over him; nor out of his feet, to be trampled on by him; but out of his side, to be equal with him; under his arm, to be protected; and near his heart, to be beloved" (Henry). (4) Woman was constructed with the greatest possible care. The entire operation was carried through, not only under God's immediate superintendence, but exclusively by God's own hand. Adam neither saw, knew, nor took part in the work. God cast him into a deep sleep, "that no room might be left to imagine that he had herein directed the Spirit of the Lord, or been his counsellor" (Henry). Then by God's own hand Adam's side was opened, a rib extracted, the flesh closed in its stead, and finally, the rib thus removed from Adam's side—

"Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained,
And in her looks; . . . . .
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love" (Milton, 'Par. Lost,' Bk. viii. 469).

2. *Divinely presented* (ver. 22). "The Lord brought her unto the man." "Wherein we have exemplified the three great causes of marriage. (1) The father's consent, in God's giving. (2) The woman's consent, in Eve's coming. This was no forced marriage; the woman comes freely. (3) The man's consent, in Adam's receiving. 'And Adam said, This is at last bone of my bone'" (Hughes). And without these human marriages are sinfully contracted. Love for the bride is one of the signs which God vouchsafes of his approval of a marriage; the bride's affection for the bridegroom is another; while a third is the approbation and the blessing of the parents of both.

III. THE WEDDED PAIR. 1. *Married by God.* "God is the best maker of marriages" (Shakespeare). Nay, unless God unites there is no real marriage, but only an unhallowed connection, legitimised by man's laws, it may be, but not sanctioned by God's. As this wedding was of God's arranging, so likewise was it of his celebrating. What celestial benedictions were outbreathed upon the young and innocent pair, as they stood there before their Maker, radiant in beauty, tremulous with joy, full of adoration, we are left to imagine. Happy they whose nuptials are first sanctioned and then celebrated by the living God! 2. *United in love.* This first marriage was certainly something more than a social or a civil contract; something other than a union of convenience or a diplomatic alliance; something vastly different from a legalised connubium. It was the realisation of what our Laureate pictures as the ideal marriage:—

"Each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single, pure, and perfect animal;
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life" ('Princess,' vii.).

3. *Clothed in innocence.* Never had bridal pair so beautiful and radiant apparel. The unclothed bodies of our first parents we can imagine were enswathed in ethereal and transfiguring light; in their case the outshining of their holy souls, which, as yet,

were the undimmed and unmarred image of their Maker, capable of receiving and reflecting his glory. Alas, never bridal pair has stood in robes so fair! The beauty of holiness, the lustre of innocence, the radiance of purity have departed from the souls of men. Never till we stand in the celestial Eden, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, will garments of such incomparable splendour be ours. Meantime, let us thank God there is a spotless raiment in which our guilty souls may be arrayed, and in which it were well that every bridal pair were decked. Happy they who, when they enter into married life, can say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." 4. *Housed in paradise.* United by the hand of God, they began their married life in Eden.

"And there these twain upon the skirts of time
Sat side by side, full summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be.
Self-reverent each, and reverencing each;
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other, ev'n as those who love" (Tennyson's 'Princess,' vii.).

And so may any wedded pair be housed in Eden who, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, fill their home, however humble, with the light of love.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 18—25.—*The true life of man.* The commencement of human society. First we see man surrounded by cattle, fowl, and beast of the field, which were brought to him by God as to their lord and ruler, that he might name them as from himself. "What *he* called every living creature was the name thereof." Nothing could better represent the organisation of the earthly life upon the basis of man's supremacy. But there is no helpmeet for man ("*as before him,*" the reflection of himself) in all the lower creation.

I. HUMAN SOCIETY MUST SPRING OUT OF SOMETHING HIGHER THAN ANIMAL LIFE AND MAN'S MERE EARTHLY POSITION. The deep sleep, the Divine manipulation of man's fleshly frame, the formation of the new creature, not out of the ground, but out of man, the exclamation of Adam, This is another self, my bone and my flesh, therefore she shall be called *woman*, because so closely akin to man—all this, whatever physical interpretation we give to it, represents the fact that companionship, family life, man's intercourse with his fellow, all the relations which spring from the fleshly unity of the race, are of the most sacred character. As they are *from God*, and specially of God's *appointment*, so they should be *for God*.

II. There, in home life, torn off, as it were, from the larger sphere, that it may be THE NEW BEGINNING OF THE NEW WORLD TO US, should be the special recognition of God, the family altar, the house of man a house of God.

III. The Divine beginning of human life is the foundation on which we build up society. THE RELATIONS OF THE SEXES WILL BE PUREST AND NOBLEST the more the heart of man unfolds itself in the element of the heavenly love.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1—7.—How long the paradisiacal state of innocence and felicity continued the historian does not declare, probably as not falling within the scope of his immediate design. Ps. xlix. 12 has been thought, though without sufficient reason, to hint that man's Eden life was of comparatively short duration. The present chapter relates the tragic incident which brought it to a termination. Into the question of the origin of moral evil in the universe it does not enter. The metaphysical problem of how the first thought of sin could arise in innocent beings it does not attempt to resolve. It seeks to explain the

genesis of evil with reference to man. Nor even with regard to this does it aim at an exhaustive dissertation, but only at such a statement of its beginnings as shall demonstrate that God is not the author of sin, but that man, by his own free volition, brought his pristine state of purity and happiness to an end. A due regard to this, the specific object of the Mosaic narrative, will go far to answer not a few of the objections which have been taken to its historic credibility. Like the Mosaic record of creation, the Biblical story of the fall has been impugned on a variety of grounds. 1. The *doctrine* of a fall, which this chapter clearly teaches, has been assailed as inconsistent with the dictates of a speculative philosophy, if not also with the tenets of a Scriptural theology. While in the present narrative the origin of sin is distinctly traced back to the free volition of man acting without constraint, though not without temptation, in opposition to the Divine will, a more exact psychological analysis, it is alleged, declares it to have been from the first a necessity, either (1) *metaphysically*, as being involved in the very conception of a finite will (Spinoza, Leibnitz, Baur); or (2) *historically*, "as the expression of the necessary transition of the human race from the state of nature to that of culture" (Fichte, Kant, Schiller), or as developing itself in obedience to the law of antagonism and conflict (John Scotus Erigena, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schelling); or (3) *theologically*, as predetermined by a Divine decree (supralapsarianism). Without offering any separate refutation of these anti-Scriptural theories, it may suffice to say that in all questions affecting man's responsibility, the testimony of the individual consciousness, the ultimate ground of appeal, apart from revelation, affirms moral evil to be no all-controlling necessity, but the free product of the will of the creature. 2. The *narrative* of the fall has been impugned—(1) On the ground of its *miraculous character*. But unless we are prepared to equate the supernatural with the impossible and incredible, we must decline to admit the force of such objections. (2) On the ground of its *mythical form*, resembling as it does, in some slight degree, Oriental traditions, and in particular the Persian legend of Ormuzd and Ahriman (*vide infra*, 'Traditions of the Fall'). But here the same remark will apply as was made in connection with the similarity alleged to exist between the Mosaic and heathen cosmogonies: it is immeasurably easier and more natural to account for the resemblance of Oriental legend to Biblical history, by supposing the former to be a traditional reflection of the latter, than it is to explain the unchallengeable superiority of the latter to the former, even in a literary point of view, not to mention ethical aspects at all, by tracing both to a common source—the philosophic or theologic consciousness of man. (3) There are also those who, while neither repudiating it on the ground of miracle, nor discrediting it as a heathen myth, yet decline to accept it as other than a *parabolic* or allegorical narration of what transpired in the spiritual experience of the first pair. History is often a parable of truth.

Ver. 1.—**Now** (literally, and) **the serpent.** *Nachash*, from *nachash* — (1) in Kal, to hiss (unused), with allusion to the hissing sound emitted by the reptile (Gesenius, Fürst), though it has been objected that prior to the fall the serpent could hardly have been called by a name derived from its present constitution (Delitzsch); (2) in Piel, to whisper, use sorcery, find out by divination (ch. xxx. 27), suggestive of the creature's wisdom (Bush), which, however, is regarded as doubtful (Fürst); (3) to shine (unused, though supplying the noun *nechsheth*, brass, ch. iv. 22), referring to its glossy shining appearance, and in particular its bright glistening eye: cf. δράκων from δέρκομαι, and ὄφις from ὄπτομαι (T. Lewis); (4) from an Arabic root signifying to pierce, to move, to creep, so that *nachash* would be Latin *serpens* (Fürst). The presence of the article before *nachash* has been thought to mean *a certain serpent*, but "by eminent authorities this is pronounced to be unwarranted" (Macdonald). **Was more subtil.** *'Arum*—(1) Crafty (cf. Job v. 12; xv. 5); (2) prudent, in a good sense (cf. Prov. xii. 16), from *'aram*—(*a*) To make naked; whence *arom*, plural *arumim*, naked (ch. ii. 25). (*b*) To be crafty (1 Sam. xxiii. 22). If applied to the serpent in the sense of πανοῦργος (Aquila, Keil, Lange, Macdonald), it can only be either (1) metaphorically for the devil, whose instrument it was; or (2) proleptically, with reference to the results of the temptation; for in itself, as one of God's creatures, it must have been originally good. It seems more correct to regard the epithet as equivalent to φρόνιμος (LXX.), and to hold that Moses, in referring to the subtlety of this

creature, "does not so much point out a fault as attribute praise to nature" (Calvin), and describes qualities which in themselves were good, such as quickness of sight, swiftness of motion, activity of the self-preserving instinct, seemingly intelligent adaptation of means to end, with perhaps a glance, in the use of *'arum*, at the sleekness of its glossy skin; but which were capable of being perverted to an unnatural use by the power and craft of a superior intelligence (cf. Matt. x. 16: γίνεσθε οὖν φρόνιμοι ὡς οἱ ὄφεις). **Than any** (literally, *was subtil more than any*) **beast of the field which the Lord God had made.** The comparison here instituted is commonly regarded as a proof that the tempter was a literal serpent, though Macdonald finds in the contrast between it and all other creatures, as well as in the ascription to it of pre-eminent subtlety, which is not now a characteristic of serpents, "an intimation that the reptile was no creature of earth, or one that received its form from God," an opinion scarcely different from that of Cyril (c. Julian., lib. 3), that it was only the *simulacrum* of a serpent. But (1) the curse pronounced upon the serpent (ch. iii. 14) would seem to be deprived of all force if the subject of it had been only an apparition or an unreal creature; and (2) the language of the New Testament in referring to man's temptation implies its literality (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 3). "We are perfectly justified in concluding, from this mention of the fall, that Paul spoke of it as an actual occurrence" (Olshausen). Adam Clarke contends with much enthusiasm that the tempter was not a serpent, but an ape or ourang outang. **And he said.** Not as originally endowed with speech (Josephus, Clarke), or gifted at this particular time with the power of articulation ('Ephrem., lib. de paradiso,' c. 27, quoted by Willet), but simply as used by the devil (Augustine, Calvin, Rosenmüller, *et alii*), who from this circumstance is commonly styled in Scripture "the serpent," "the old serpent," "that old serpent" (cf. Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2). Nor is it more difficult to understand the speaking of the serpent when possessed by Satan, than the talking of Balaam's ass when the Lord opened its mouth (Num. xxii. 28—30). Equally with the idea that the devil was the only agent in man's temptation, and that the serpent is purely the allegorical dress in which the historian clothes him (Eusebius, Cajetan, Quarry, Alford), must the notion be rejected that there was nothing but a serpent (Aben Ezra, Kalisch, Knobel). Why, if there was an evil spirit manipulating the reptile, the historian did not say so has been explained (1) on the ground that the belief in the devil was then foreign to the Hebrews (Knobel); (2) that up to this point in the narrative there is no mention of the devil (White of Dorchester); (3) that Moses simply wished to be *rei gestæ scriptor non interpres* (Pererius); (4) that it was unnecessary, those for whom he wrote being sufficiently capable of discerning that the serpent was not the prime mover in the transaction (Candlish); (5) that "by a homely and uncultivated style he accommodates what he delivers to the capacity of the people" (Calvin); (6) that his object being merely to show that God had no hand in man's temptation, but that Adam sinned of himself, it was not needful to do more than recite the incident as it appeared to the senses (White); (7) that he wished "to avoid encouraging the disposition to transfer the blame to the evil spirit which tempted man, and thus reduce sin to a mere act of weakness" (Keil). **Unto the woman.** As the weaker of the two, and more likely to be easily persuaded (1 Tim. ii. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 7). Cf. Satan's assault on Job through his wife (Job ii. 9). Milton's idea that Eve desired to be independent, and had withdrawn herself out of Adam's sight, it has been well remarked, "sets up a beginning of the fall before the fall itself" (Lange). **Yea.** אַף כִּי. Is it even so that? (Gesenius). Is it really so that? (Ewald, Fürst, Keil). *Etiamne, vel Itane* (Calvin). A question either (1) spoken in irony, as if the meaning were, "Very like it is that God careth what you eat!" or (2) inquiring the reason of the prohibition (LXX., τί ὅτι εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς; Vulgate, *cur præcepit vobis Deus*); or (3) simply soliciting information (Chaldee Paraphrase); but (4) most likely expressing surprise and astonishment, with the view of suggesting distrust of the Divine goodness and disbelief in the Divine veracity (Ewald, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Keil, Macdonald, Lange). The conversation may have been commenced by the tempter, and the question "thrown out as a feeler for some weak point where the fidelity of the woman might be shaken" (Murphy); but it is more likely that the devil spoke in continuation of a colloquy which is not reported (Kalisch, Macdonald), which has led some, on the supposition that already many arguments had been adduced to substantiate the Divine severity, to render "yea" by "*quanto magis*," as if the meaning were, "How much more is this a proof of God's unkindness!" (Aben Ezra, Kimchi). **Hath God said.** "The tempter felt it necessary to change the living personal God into a merely general *numen divinum*" (Keil); but the Elohim of ch. i. 1 was not a mere *numen divinum*. As much astray is the observation that Satan wished to avoid profaning the name of Jehovah (Knobel). Better is the remark that the serpent could not utter the name Jehovah, as his assault was directed against the paradisiacal covenant of God

with man (Lange). By using the name Elohim instead of Jehovah the covenant relationship of God towards man was obscured, and man's position in the garden represented as that of a subject rather than a son. As it were, Eve was first placed at the furthest distance possible from the supreme, and then assailed. **Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden.** *I. e.* either accepting the present rendering as correct, which the Hebrew will bear,—"Are there any trees in the garden of which you may not eat?" "Is it really so that God hath prohibited you from some?" (Calvin),—or, translating *lo-kol* as *not any*—Latin, *nullus* (Gesenius, § 152, 1)—"Hath God said ye shall not eat of any?" (Macdonald, Keil). According to the first the devil simply seeks to impeach the Divine goodness; according to the second he also aims at intensifying the Divine prohibition. The second rendering appears to be supported by the fitness of Eve's reply.

Vers. 2, 3.—**And the woman said unto the serpent.** Neither afraid of the reptile, there being not yet any enmity among the creatures; nor astonished at his speaking, perhaps as being not yet fully acquainted with the capabilities of the lower animals; nor suspicious of his designs, her innocence and inexperience not predisposing her to apprehend danger. Yet the tenor of the reptile's interrogation was fitted to excite alarm; and if, as some conjecture, she understood that Satan was the speaker, she should at once have taken flight; while, if she knew nothing of him or his disposition, she should not have opened herself so freely to a person unknown. "The woman certainly discovers some unadvisedness in entertaining conference with the serpent, in matters of so great importance, in so familiar a manner" (White). **We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.** (1) Omitting the Divine name when recording his liberality, though she remembers it when reciting his restraint; (2) failing to do justice to the largeness and freeness of the Divine grant (cf. with ch. ii. 16);—which, however, charity would do well not to press against the woman as symptoms of incipient rebellion. **But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it.** An addition to the prohibitory enactment, which may have been simply an inaccuracy in her understanding of Adam's report of its exact terms (Kalisch); or the result of a rising feeling of dissatisfaction with the too great strictness of the prohibition (Delitzsch), and so an indication "that her love and confidence towards God were already beginning to waver" (Keil); or a proof of her anxiety to observe the Divine precept (Calvin); or a statement of her understanding "that they were not to meddle with it as a forbidden thing" (Murphy). **Lest ye die.** Even Calvin here admits that Eve begins to give way, reading פֶּן as *forte*, with which Macdonald appears to agree, discovering "doubt and hesitancy" in her language; but—(1) the conjunction may point to a consequence which is certain—indeed this is its usual meaning (cf. ch. xi. 4; xix. 5; Ps. ii. 12); (2) "Where there are so many *real* grounds for condemning Eve's conduct, it is our duty to be cautious in giving those which are problematical" (Bush); and, (3) "she would have represented the penalty in a worse rather than a softened form had she begun to think it unjust" (Inglis).

Ver. 4.—**And the serpent said unto the woman.** "As God had preached to Adam, so Satan now also preaches to Eve. . . . . . The object of Satan was to draw away Eve by *his word* or saying from that which God had said" (Luther). **Ye shall not surely die.** *Lō-mōth temūthun* (the negative *lō* preceding the infinitive absolute, as in Ps. xlix. 8 and Amos ix. 8; its position here being determined by the form of the penalty, ch. ii. 17, to which the devil's language gives the direct negative. *Vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 312). Thus the second step in his assault is to challenge the Divine veracity, in allusion to which it has been thought our Saviour calls Satan a liar (cf. John viii. 44: *ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ· ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ*). "Here, as far as we know, is his first begottten lie" (Bush).

Ver. 5.—**For** (כִּי—*nam*, *γαρ*, for, because; assigning the reason (1) for the devil's statement, and so, (2) by implication, for the Divine prohibition) **God doth know.** Thus the serpent practically charges the Deity with with (1) envy of his creatures' happiness, as if he meant to say, Depend upon it, it is not through any fear of your dying from its fruit that the tree has been interdicted, but through fear of your becoming rivals to your Master himself; and (2) with falsehood—(*a*) in affirming that to be true which he knew to be false; (*b*) in doing this while delivering his law; (*c*) in pretending to be careful of man's safety while in reality he was only jealous of his own honour. **That in the day ye eat thereof.** Cf. the Divine prohibition (ch. ii. 17), the exact terms of which are again used—a mark of growing aggressiveness towards the woman, and of special audacity towards God. The prohibition employs the singular number, being addressed to Adam only; the devil employs the plural, as his words were meant not for Eve alone, but for her husband with her. **Your eyes shall be opened.** "To open the eyes," the usual Biblical phrase for

restoring sight to the blind (2 Kings vi. 17, 20; Ps. cxlvi. 8; Isa. xlii. 7), is also used to denote the impartation of power to perceive (physically, mentally, spiritually) objects not otherwise discernible (cf. ch. xxi. 19; Isa. xxxv. 5). Here it was designed to be ambiguous; like all Satan's oracles, suggesting to the hearer the attainment of higher wisdom, but meaning in the intention of the speaker only a discovery of their nakedness. The same ambiguity attaches to the devil's exposition of his own text. **And ye shall be as gods.** Literally, as *Elohim;* not ὡς θεοὶ (LXX.), *sicut dii* (Vulgate), as gods (A. V.), as the angels (R. Jonathan), as the devils (Ainsworth), *dæmonibusque, diisve similes* (Rosenmüller), as princes (White); but as the supreme Deity (Calvin, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*)—ostensibly a promise of divinity. **Knowing good and evil.** As they knew this already from the prohibition, the language must imply a fulness and accuracy of understanding such as was competent only to Elohim (*vide* on ver. 22).

Ver. 6.—**And** (when) **the woman saw.** "An impure look, infected with the poison of concupiscence" (Calvin); cf. Joshua vii. 21. **That the tree was good for food.** "The fruit of this tree may have been neither poisonous nor beautiful, or it may have been both; but sin has the strange power of investing the object of desire for the time being, whatever its true character, with a wonderful attraction" (Inglis). **And that it** (was) **pleasant.** Literally, a desire (Ps. x. 17), a lust (Num. xi. 4). **To the eyes.** Ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς (LXX.); *pulchrum oculis* (Vulgate); lustye unto the eyes (Coverdale); *i. e.* stimulating desire through the eyes (cf. 1 John ii. 16). **And a tree to be desired to make** (one) **wise.** לְהַשְׂכִּיל (from שָׂכַל—(1) to look at, to behold; hence (2) to be prudent, 1 Sam. xviii. 30. Hiph., (1) to look at; (2) to turn the mind to; (3) to be or become understanding, Ps. ii. 10) being susceptible of two renderings, the clause has been taken to mean "a tree desirable to look at" (Syriac, Onkelos, Vulgate, Gesenius, Kalisch, Wordsworth), or, more correctly, as it stands in the English Version, the external loveliness of the tree having been already stated in the preceding clause (LXX., Aben Ezra, Calvin, Hengstenberg, Macdonald). This is the third time the charms of the tree are discerned and expressed by the woman—a significant intimation of how far the Divine interdict had receded from her consciousness. **She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.** Thus consummating the sin (James i. 15). **And gave also to her husband.** Being desirous, doubtless, of making him a sharer in her supposed felicity. The first time Adam is styled Eve's husband, or man; perhaps designed to indicate the complete perversion by Eve of the Divine purpose of her marriage with Adam, which was to be a helpmeet for him, and not his destroyer. **With her.** An indication that Adam was present throughout the whole preceding scene (Delitzsch, Wordsworth), which is not likely, else why did he not restrain Eve? or that he arrived just as the temptation closed (Calvin), which is only a conjecture; better regarded as a reference to their conjugal oneness (Macdonald). **And he did eat.** And so involved himself in the criminality of his already guilty partner; not simply as being "captivated with her allurements" ("fondly overcome with female charms"—Milton, 'Par. Lost,' Book x.), which 1 Tim. ii. 14 is supposed to justify; but likewise as being "persuaded by Satan's impostures," which doubtless Eve had related to him. This much is distinctly implied in those Scriptures which speak of Adam as the chief transgressor (*vide* Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22).

Ver. 7.—**And the eyes of them both were opened.** The fatal deed committed, the promised results ensued, but not the anticipated blessings. (1) The eyes of their minds were opened to perceive that they were no longer innocent, and (2) the eyes of their bodies to behold that they were not precisely as they had been. **And they knew that they were naked.** (1) Spiritually (cf. Exod. xxxii. 25; Ezek. xvi. 22; Rev. iii. 17), and (2) corporeally, having lost that enswathing light of purity which previously engirt their bodies (*vide* ch. ii. 25). **And they sewed.** Literally, fastened or tied by twisting. **Fig leaves.** Not the pisang tree (*Musa Paradisiaca*), whose leaves attain the length of twelve feet and the breadth of two (Knobel Bohlen); but the common fig tree (*Ficus Carica*), which is aboriginal in Western Asia, especially in Persia, Syria, and Asia Minor (Kalisch, Keil, Macdonald). **Together, and made themselves aprons.** Literally, girdles, περιζώματα (LXX.), *i. e.* to wrap about their loins. This sense of shame which caused them to seek a covering for their nudity was not due to any physical corruption of the body (Baumgarten), but to the consciousness of guilt with which their souls were laden, and which impelled them to flee from the presence of their offended Sovereign.

TRADITIONS OF THE FALL.

I. ORIENTAL. 1. *Babylonian.* "There is nothing in the Chaldean fragments indicating a belief in the garden of Eden or the tree of knowledge; there is only an obscure allusion to a thirst for knowledge having been a cause of man's fall." . . . The details of the temptation are lost in the cuneiform

text, which "opens where the gods are cursing the dragon and the Adam or man for his transgression." . . . "The dragon, which, in the Chaldean account, leads man to sin, is the creature of Tiamat, the living principle of the sea and of chaos, and he is an embodiment of the spirit of chaos or disorder which was opposed to the deities at the creation of the world." The dragon is included in the curse for the fall; and the gods invoke on the human race all the evils which afflict humanity—family quarrels, tyranny, the anger of the gods, disappointment, famine, useless prayers, trouble of mind and body, a tendency to sin ('Chaldean Genesis,' pp. 87—91). 2. *Persian.* For a time the first pair, Meschia and Meschiane, were holy and happy, pure in word and deed, dwelling in a garden wherein was a tree whose fruit conferred life and immortality; but eventually Ahriman deceived them, and drew them away from Ormuzd. Emboldened by his success, the enemy again appeared, and gave them a fruit, of which they ate, with the result that, of the hundred blessings which they enjoyed, all disappeared save one. Falling beneath the power of the evil one, they practised the mechanical arts, and subsequently built themselves houses and clothed themselves with skins. Another form of the legend represents Ahriman as a serpent. So close is the resemblance of this legend to the Scriptural account, that Rawlinson regards it not as a primitive tradition, but rather as "an infiltration into the Persian system of religious ideas belonging properly to the Hebrews" ('Hist. Illus. of the Old Testament,' p. 13). 3. *Indian.* In the Hindoo mythology the king of the evil demons, "the king of the serpents," is named Naga, the prince of the Nagis or Nacigs, "in which Sanscrit appellation we plainly trace the Hebrew Nachash." In the Vishnu Purana the first beings created by Brama are represented as endowed with righteousness and perfect faith, as free from guilt and filled with perfect wisdom, wherewith they contemplated the glory of Vishnu, till after a time they are seduced. In the legends of India the triumph of Krishna over the great serpent Kali Naga, who had poisoned the waters of the river, but who himself was ultimately destroyed by Krishna trampling on his head, bears a striking analogy to the Mosaic story (Kitto's 'Daily Bible Illustrations').

II. OCCIDENTAL. 1. *The story of Pandora.* According to Hesiod the first men lived wifeless and ignorant, but innocent and happy. Prometheus ("Forethought") having stolen fire from heaven, taught its use to mankind. To punish the aspiring mortals, Zeus sent among them Pandora, a beautiful woman, whom he had instructed Hephæstus to make, and Aphrodite, Athena, and Hermes had endowed with all seductive charms. Epimetheus ("Afterthought"), the brother of Prometheus, to whom she was presented, accepted her, and made her his wife. Brought into his house, curiosity prevailed on her to lift the lid of a closed jar in which the elder brother had with prudent foresight shut up all kinds of ills and diseases. Forthwith they escaped to torment mankind, which they have done ever since (Seemann's 'Mythology,' p. 163). 2. *The apples of the Hesperides.* These golden apples, which were under the guardianship of the nymphs of the West, were closely watched by a terrible dragon named Ladon, on account of an ancient oracle that a son of the deity would at a certain time arrive, open a way of access thither, and carry them off. Hercules, having inquired his way to the garden in which they grew, destroyed the monster and fulfilled the oracle (*ibid.*, p. 204). 3. *Apollo and the Python.* "This Python, ancient legends affirm, was a serpent bred out of the slime that remained after Deucalion's deluge, and was worshipped as a god at Delphi. Eminent authorities derive the name of the monster from a Hebrew root signifying to deceive." As the bright god of heaven, to whom everything impure and unholy is hateful, Apollo, four days after his birth, slew this monster with his arrows.

"What shall we say then to these things? This—that the nations embodied in these traditions their remembrances of paradise, of the fall, and of the promised salvation" (Kitto, 'Daily Bible Illustrations' p. 67).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 6.—*The first sin.*—I. THE TEMPTATION. 1. The *fact.* That sin is possible even in pure beings without the intervention of solicitation, at least *ab extra*, must be held to be the doctrine of Scripture (*vide* James i. 14 and Jude 6). Hence man might have fallen, even had he not been tempted. The fact, however, that he was tempted is explicitly revealed; a circumstance which notes an important distinction between his sin and that of the angels. Does this explain Heb. ii. 16 and 2 Pet. ii. 4? 2. *The author.* Though ostensibly a serpent, in reality the devil. Besides being expressly stated in the inspired word, it is involved in the very terms of the Mosaic narrative. If the *reptile* possessed the malice to conceive and the skill to manage such an assault upon the first pair as this book describes, then clearly it was not a *serpent*, but a *devil.* It is doubtful if all man's temptations come from the devil, but many, perhaps most, do. He is pre-eminently styled "the tempter" (Matt. iv. 3; 1 Thess. iii. 5). From the days of Adam downward he has been engaged in attempting to seduce the saints; *e. g.* David (1 Chron. xxi. 1); Job (ch. ii. 7); Christ (Luke iv. 13); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 3). At the present moment he is labouring to deceive the whole world (Rev. xii. 9). 3. The *instrument.* The serpent, which was a proof of Satan's skill, that particular reptile being specially adapted for his purpose (N.B.—The devil can always find a tool adapted to the work he has in hand); and is an indication of our danger, it being only a reptile, and therefore little likely to be suspected as a source of peril; whence we may gather that there is no quarter so unexpected, and no instrument so feeble, that out of the one and through the other temptation may not leap upon us. 4. The *nature.* This was threefold. A temptation (1) to suspect the Divine goodness (ver. 1); (2) to disbelieve the Divine word (ver. 4); (3) to emulate the Divine greatness (ver. 5). (Cf. the three assaults upon the Second Adam (Matt. iv. 1; Luke iv. 1), which were essentially the same.) The first aimed a death-blow at their filial confidence in God; the second removed the fear of punishment from their path; the third fired their souls with the lust of ambition. Separation from God, disobedience of God, opposition to or rivalry with God—the devil's *scala cœli.* 5. The *subtlety.* That great art should have been displayed in the conduct of this campaign against the citadel of human holiness is what might have been expected from such a general. In these respects it was evinced. (1) The assault was commenced before use and practice had confirmed the first pair in obedience. (2) He began with the woman, who was the weaker of the two. (3) He attacked her when alone—the best time for temptation. Beware of solitude. (4) He selected the best ground for delivering his first blow—when the woman was in full sight of the tree. (5) He was extremely cautious so to moderate his onset as not to excite alarm—beginning with a casual inquiry. (6) He advanced by degrees as he obtained a footing in the woman's heart. (7) He never revealed the proper scope and drift of his observations, but always couched them in obscure and ambiguous language. (8) He never seemed to lead, but always to be following the woman's thought. (9) In all he said and did he pretended to be seeking his victim's good. (10) He chose the best of all possible baits to captivate the woman's fancy and excite her cupidity—the hope of gaining knowledge.

II. THE TRANSGRESSION. 1. Its guilty *perpetrators.* Not the serpent or the devil, but the first pair. The devil may tempt man to sin, but he cannot sin for man. A creature may be the unconscious instrument of leading man aside from the path of virtue, but it cannot possibly compel man to go astray. Men are prone to blame other things and persons for their sins, when the true criminals are themselves. 2. Its impelling *motive.* No temptation, however skilfully planned or powerfully applied, can succeed until it finds a footing in the nature that is tempted. Unless the devil's logic and chicanery had produced the effect described in ver. 6, it is more than probable that Eve would have stood. But first it wrought a change upon herself, and then it transformed the tree. First it created the need for sinful motives, and then it supplied them. So works temptation still. As with Eve, so with us. Sinful motives are (1) demanded by the heart; (2) supplied by the evil which the heart contemplates; and (3) are generally as weak and insufficient as Eve's. 3.

Its essential *wickedness*, as consisting of (1) unbelief, revealing itself in disobedience; (2) selfishness, making self the centre of all things; (3) desire, love of the world, gratification of the senses, the fundamental elements in all sin, corresponding to the three fundamental elements of man's being and consciousness—spirit, soul, body (cf. Auberlen's 'Divine Revelation,' Part I., § 3, ch. ix.). 4. Its sad *results*. (1) A discovery of *sin*. "Their eyes were opened," as the devil said, and as he meant. They felt that they had fallen, and that they had lost their purity. It is impossible to sin and not to have this knowledge and feel this loss. (2) A consciousness of *guilt*. "They knew that they were naked." Sin reports itself quickly to the conscience, and conscience quickly discovers to the guilty soul its true position as an unprotected culprit before the bar of God. (3) A sense of *shame*, which impelled them to seek a covering for their persons. "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves girdles." A picture of men's fruitless efforts to find a covering for their guilty souls.

Lessons:—1. The responsibility of man. 2. The duty of guarding against temptation. 3. The contagious character of moral evil. 4. The havoc wrought by a single sin.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*The tempter*. I. WHO TEMPTS? 1. Not the mere serpent. 2. A higher power of evil. 3. This higher power a person. 4. The leader of the fallen angels.

II. WHY PERMITTED? Easy to see why *moved*; why permitted, a *mystery*. But we may note—1. That the intercourse of mind with mind is a general law of nature. To exclude the devil, therefore, from gaining access to man might have involved as great a miracle as preventing one mind from influencing another. 2. That the good as well as the evil angels have access to us. Can we estimate their influence, or be sure that Adam's position or the world's would have been better if both had been excluded? 3. That possibly by this sin *under* temptation we were saved from a worse sin *apart* from temptation. 4. That God magnifies his grace and vindicates his power against the devil's in raising fallen man above his first place of creatureship into that of sonship.

III. WHY EMPLOY THE SERPENT? 1. Because not permitted to assume a higher form—his masterpiece of craft, "an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14), or his masterpiece of power, a mighty prince (Matt. iv. 1). 2. Because of all animals the serpent seemed the fittest for his purpose.—W.

Vers. 1—7.—*The moral chaos before the moral restoration.* Hitherto the moral nature of man may be said to be absorbed in his religious nature. He has held intercourse with his Creator. He has ruled earth as "the paragon of animals." The introduction of a helpmeet was the commencement of society, therefore of distinctly moral relations. It is in the moral sphere that sin takes its origin, through the helpmeet, and as a violation at the same time of a direct Divine commandment, and of that social compact of obedience to God and dependence upon one another which is the root of all true moral life. The woman was away from the man when she sinned. Her sin was more than a sin against God; it was an offence against the law of her being as one with her husband. There are many suggestive points in the verses (1—7) which we may call the return of man's moral state into chaos, that out of it may come forth, by Divine grace, the new creation of a redeemed humanity.

I. As it is only IN THE MORAL SPHERE THAT SIN IS POSSIBLE, SO IT IS BY THE CONTACT OF A FORMER CORRUPTION WITH MAN that the evil principle is introduced into the world. The serpent's subtlety represents that evil principle already in operation.

II. While the whole transaction is on the line of moral and religious responsibility IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCONNECT THE ANIMAL NATURE FROM THE FIRST TEMPTATION. The serpent, the woman, the tree, the eating of fruit, the pleasantness to taste and sight, the effect upon the fleshly feelings, all point to the close relation of the animal and the moral. There is nothing implied as to the nature of matter, but it is plainly taught that the effect of a loss of moral and spiritual dignity is a sinking back into the lower grade of life; as man is less a child of God he is more akin to the beasts that perish.

III. THE TEMPTATION IS BASED ON A LIE; first soliciting the mind through a question, a perplexity, then passing to a direct contradiction of God's word, and blasphemous suggestion of his ill-will towards man, together with an excitement of pride and overweening desire in man's heart. The serpent did not directly open the door of disobedience. He led the woman up to it, and stirred in her the evil thought of passing through it. The first temptation is the type of all temptation. Notice the three points:—(1) *falsification of fact and confusion of mind;* (2) *alienation from God* as the Source of all good and the only wise Ruler of our life; (3) *desire* selfishly exalting itself above the recognised and appointed limits. Another suggestion is—

IV. THE IMPOSSIBILITY THAT SIN SHOULD NOT FRUCTIFY IMMEDIATELY THAT IT BECOMES A FACT OF THE LIFE. Temptation is not sin. Temptation resisted is moral strength. Temptation yielded to is an evil principle admitted into the sphere of its operation, and beginning its work at once. The woman violated her true position by her sin; it was the consequence of that position that she became a tempter herself to Adam, so that the helpmeet became to Adam what the serpent was to her. His eating *with* her was, as Milton so powerfully describes it, at once—(1) a testimony to their oneness, and therefore to the power of that love which might have been only a blessing; and (2) a condemnation of both alike. The woman was first in the condemnation, but the man was first in the knowledge of the commandment and in the privilege of his position; therefore the man was first in *degree* of condemnation, while the woman was first in the *order of time.*

V. THE WORK OF SIN UPON THE WHOLE NATURE IS IMMEDIATE. The knowledge of good and evil is the commencement of a conflict between the laws of nature and the laws of the human spirit in its connection with nature, which nothing but the grace of God can bring to an end in the "peace which passeth understanding." That springing up of shame in the knowledge of natural facts is a testimony to a violation of God's order which he alone can set right. "Who told thee," God said, "that thou wast naked?" God might have raised his creature to a position in which shame would have been impossible. He will do so by his grace. Meanwhile the fall was what the word represents — a forfeiture of that superiority to the mere animal nature which was man's birthright. And the results of the fall are seen in the perpetual warfare between the natural world and the spiritual world in that being who was made at once a being of earth and a child of God. "They sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." In the sense of humiliation and defeat man turns to the mere *material* protection of surrounding objects, forgetting that a *spiritual* evil can only be remedied by a *spiritual* good; but the shameful helplessness of the creature is the opportunity for the gracious interposition of God.—R.

Ver. 4.—*The tempter's chief weapon.* Narrative of the fall is of interest not only as the record of how mankind became sinful, but as showing the working of that "lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11) by which the tempter continually seeks to draw men away (2 Cor. xi. 3). Eve's temptation is in substance our temptation; Eve's fall illustrates our danger, and gives us matter whereby to try ourselves and mark how far we "walk by faith."

The SUBSTANCE OF THE TEMPTATION was suggesting doubts—(1) As to God's love. (2) As to God's truth. The former led to self-willed desire; the latter gave force to the temptation by removing the restraining power. We are tempted by the same suggestions. The will and unbelief act and react upon each other. Where the will turns away from God's will doubt more easily finds an entrance, and having entered, it strengthens self-will (Rom. i. 28). Unbelief is often a refuge to escape from the voice of conscience. But mark—the suggestion was not, "God has not said," but, It will not be so; You have misunderstood him; There will be some way of avoiding the danger. Excuses are easy to find: human infirmity, peculiar circumstances, strength of temptation, promises not to do so again. And a man may live, knowing God's word, habitually breaking it, yet persuading himself that all is well. Note two chief lines in which this temptation assails:—1. *As to the necessity for Christian earnestness.* We are warned (1 John ii. 15; v. 12; Rom. viii. 6—13). What is the life thus spoken of? Nothing strange. A life of seeking the world's

prizes, gains, pleasures. A life whose guide is what others do; in which the example of Christ and guidance of the Holy Spirit are not regarded; in which religion is kept apart, and confined to certain times and services. Of this God says it is living death (cf. 1 Tim. v. 6); life's work neglected; Christ's banner deserted. Yet the tempter persuades—times have changed, the Bible must not be taken literally, ye shall not die. 2. *As to acceptance of the gift of salvation.* God's word is (Mark xvi. 15; Luke xiv. 21; John iv. 10) the record to be believed (Isa. liii. 5, 6; 1 John v. 11). Yet speak to men of the free gift, tell them of present salvation; the tempter persuades—true; but you must do something, or feel something, before it can be safe to believe;—God has said; but it will not be so. In conclusion, mark how the way of salvation just reverses the process of the fall. Man fell away from God, from peace, from holiness through doubting God's love and truth. We are restored to peace through believing these (John iii. 16; 1 John i. 9), and it is this belief which binds us to God in loving service (2 Cor. v. 14).—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 8.—**And they heard the voice of the Lord God.** Either (1) the noise of his footsteps (cf. Levit. xxvi. 33; Num. xvi. 34; 2 Sam. v. 24; Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, Macdonald); or (2) the thunder that accompanied his approach (cf. Exod. ix. 23; Job xxxvii. 4, 5; Ps. xxix. 3, 9; Murphy, Bush); or (3) the sound of his voice (Calvin, Lange, Wordsworth); or (4) probably all four. **Walking in the garden.** If the voice, then increasing in intensity (cf. Exod. xix. 19; Bush); if Jehovah, which is better, then "wandering or walking about in a circle" within the garden bounds (Macdonald). **In the cool** (literally, the wind) **of the day.** The morning breeze (Calvin); the evening breeze (Kalisch, Macdonald); τὸ δειλινόν (LXX.); *auram post meridiem* (Vulgate); cf. *hōm ha' yōm*, "the heat of the day" (Gen. xviii. 1). **And Adam and his wife hid themselves.** Not in humility, as unworthy to come into God's presence (Irenæus); or in amazement, as not knowing which way to turn (Augustine); or through modesty, (Knobel Bohlen); but from a sense of guilt. **From the presence of the Lord.** From which it is apparent they expected a visible manifestation.

Vers. 9, 10.—**And the Lord God called unto Adam.** Adam's absence was a clear proof that something was wrong. Hitherto he had always welcomed the Divine approach. **And said unto him, Where art thou?** Not as if ignorant of Adam's hiding-place, but to bring him to confession (cf. ch. iv. 9). **And I was afraid, because I** was **naked.** Attributing his fear to the wrong cause—the voice of God or his insufficient clothing; a sign of special obduracy (Calvin), which, however, admits of a psychological explanation, viz., that "his consciousness of the effects of sin was keener than his sense of the sin itself" (Keil), "although all that he says is purely involuntary self-accusation" (Delitzsch), and "the first instance of that mingling and confusion of sin and punishment which is the peculiar characteristic of our redemption-needing humanity" (Lange). **And I hid myself.**

Vers. 11, 12.—**And he said.** "To reprove the sottishness of Adam" (Calvin); "to awaken in him a sense of sin" (Keil). **Who told thee that thou** wast **naked?** Delitzsch finds in מי an indication that a personal power was the prime cause of man's disobedience; but, as Lange rightly observes, it is the occasion not of sin, but of the consciousness of nakedness that is here inquired after. **Hast thou eaten of the tree** (at once pointing Adam to the true cause of his nakedness, and intimating the Divine cognisance of his transgression) **whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?** "Added to remove the pretext of ignorance" (Calvin), and also to aggravate the guilt of his offence, as having been done in direct violation of the Divine prohibition. The question was fitted to carry conviction to Adam's conscience, and had the instantaneous effect of eliciting a confession, though neither a frank one nor a generous. **And the man said** (beginning with apology and ending with confession,—thus reversing the natural order, and practically rolling back the blame on God), **The woman whom thou gavest to be with me** (accusing the gift and the Giver in one), **she gave me of the tree.** Cf. with the cold and unfeeling terms in which Adam speaks of Eve the similar language in Gen. xxxvii. 32; Luke xv. 30; John ix. 12. "Without natural affection" is one of the bitter fruits of sin (cf. Rom. i. 31). Equally with the blasphemy, ingratitude, unkindness, and meanness of this excuse, its frivolity is apparent; as if, though Eve gave, that was any reason why Adam should have eaten. **And I did eat.** Reluctantly elicited, the confession of his sin is very mildly stated. "A cold expression, manifesting neither any grief nor shame at so foul an act, but rather a desire to cover his sin" (White).

Ver. 13.—**And the Lord said unto the woman**—without noticing the excuses, but

simply accepting the admission, and passing on, "following up the transgression even to the root—not the psychological merely, but the historical" (Lange): **What is this** that **thou hast done?** Or, "Why hast thou done this?" (LXX., Vulgate, Luther, De Wette). "But the Hebrew phrase has more vehemence; it is the language of one who wonders as at something prodigious, and ought rather to be rendered, 'How hast thou done this?'" (Calvin). **And the woman said** (following the example of her guilty husband, omitting any notice of her sin in tempting Adam, and transferring the blame of her own disobedience to the reptile), **The serpent beguiled me.** Literally, caused me to forget, hence beguiled, from נָשָׁה, to forget a thing (Lam. iii. 17), or person (Jer. xxiii. 39; Stanley Leathes, 'Gram.,' App. 197); or, caused me to go astray, from נָשָׁא (unused in Kal), kindred to נָשָׁה, perhaps to err, to go astray (Gesenius, Fürst); *ἠπατήσε* (LXX.), *ἐξαπάτησεν* (2 Cor. xi. 3). **And I did eat.** "A forced confession, but no appearance of contrition. 'It's true I did eat, but it was not my fault'" (Hughes).

Ver. 14.—Confession having thus been made by both delinquents, and the arch-contriver of the whole mischief discovered, the Divine Judge proceeds to deliver sentence. **And the Lord God said unto the serpent.** Which he does not interrogate as he did the man and woman, "because (1) in the animal itself there was no sense of sin, and (2) to the devil he would hold out no hope of pardon" (Calvin); "because the trial has now reached the fountain-head of sin, the purely evil purpose (the demoniacal) having no deeper ground, and requiring no further investigation" (Lange). **Because thou hast done this.** *I. e.* beguiled the woman. The incidence of this curse has been explained as —1. The serpent only (Kalisch). 2. The devil only (Macdonald). 3. Partly on the serpent and partly on Satan (Calvin). 4. Wholly upon both (Murphy, Bush, Candlish). The difficulties attending these different interpretations have thus been concisely expressed:—"1. Quidam statuunt maledictionem latam in serpentem solum, quia hic confertur cum aliis bestiis, non in diabolum, quia is antea maledictus erat. 2. Alii in diabolum solum, quia brutus serpens non poterat justé puniri. 3. Alii applicant ver. 14 ad serpentem, ver. 15 in diabolum. At vero tu et te idem sunt in utroque versu. 4. Alii existimant eam in utrumque latam" (Medus in 'Poli Commentar.,' quoted by Lange). The fourth opinion seems most accordant with the language of the malediction. **Thou art cursed.** The cursing of the irrational creature should occasion no more difficulty than the cursing of the earth (ver. 17), or of the fig tree (Matt. xi. 21). Creatures can be cursed or blessed only in accordance with their natures. The reptile, therefore, being neither a moral nor responsible creature, could not be cursed in the sense of being made susceptible of misery. But it might be cursed in the sense of being deteriorated in its nature, and, as it were, consigned to a lower position in the scale of being. And as the Creator has a perfect right to assign to his creature the specific place it shall occupy, and function it shall subserve, in creation, the remanding of the reptile to an inferior position could not justly be construed into a violation of the principles of right, while it might serve to God's intelligent creatures as a visible symbol of his displeasure against sin (cf. ch. ix. 5; Exod. xxi. 28—36). **Above.** Literally, *from*, i. e. separate and apart from all cattle (Le Clerc, Von Bohlen, Tuch, Knobel, Keil); and neither *by* (Gesenius, De Wette, Baumgarten) nor *above* (Luther, A. V., Rosenmüller, Delitzsch), as if the other creatures were either participators in or the instruments of the serpent's malediction. **All cattle, and above** (apart from) **every beast of the field.** The words imply the materiality of the reptile and the reality of the curse, so far as it was concerned. **Upon thy belly.** *Ἐπὶ τῷ στήθει σου καὶ τῇ κοιλίᾳ* (LXX.); "meaning with great pain and difficulty." "As Adam's labour and Eve's conception had pain and sorrow added to them (vers. 16, 17), so the serpent's gait" (Ainsworth). **Shalt thou go.** "As the worm steals over the earth with its length of body," "as a mean and despised crawler in the dust," having previously gone erect (Luther), and been possessed of bone (Josephus), and capable of standing upright and twining itself round the trees (Lange), or at least having undergone some transformation as to external form (Delitzsch, Keil); though the language may import nothing more than that whereas the reptile had exalted itself against man, it was henceforth "to be thrust back into its proper rank," "recalled from its insolent motions to its accustomed mode of going," and "at the same time condemned to perpetual infamy" (Calvin). As applied to Satan this part of the curse proclaimed his further degradation in the scale of being in consequence of having tempted man. "Than the serpent trailing along the ground, no emblem can more aptly illustrate the character and condition of the apostate spirit who once occupied a place among the angels of God, but has been cast down to the earth, preparatory to his deeper plunge into the fiery lake (Rev. xx. 10; Macdonald). **And dust shalt thou eat.** *I. e.* mingling dust with all it should eat. "The great scantiness of food on which serpents can subsist

gave rise to the belief entertained by many Eastern nations, and referred to in several Biblical allusions (Isa. lxv. 25; Micah vii. 17)—that they eat dust" (Kalisch). More probably it originated in a too literal interpretation of the Mosaic narrative. Applied to the devil, this part of the curse was an additional intimation of his degradation. To "lick the dust" or "eat the dust" "is equivalent to being reduced to a condition of meanness, shame, and contempt" (Bush); "is indicative of disappointment in all the aims of being" (Murphy); "denotes the highest intensity of a moral condition, of which the feelings of the prodigal (Luke xv. 16) may be considered a type" (Macdonald; cf. Ps. lxxii. 9). **All the days of thy life.** The degradation should be perpetual as well as complete.

Ver. 15.—**And I will put enmity between thee and the woman.** Referring—1. To the fixed and inveterate antipathy between the serpent and the human race (Bush, Lange); to that alone (Knobel). 2. To the antagonism henceforth to be established between the tempter and mankind (Murphy); to that alone (Calvin, Bonar, Wordsworth, Macdonald). **And between thy seed and her seed.** Here the curse manifestly outgrows the literal serpent, and refers almost exclusively to the invisible tempter. The hostility commenced between the woman and her destroyer was to be continued by their descendants—the seed of the serpent being those of Eve's posterity who should imbibe the devil's spirit and obey the devil's rule (cf. Matt. xxiii. 33; 1 John iii. 10); and the seed of the woman signifying those whose character and life should be of an opposite description, and in particular the Lord Jesus Christ, who is styled by pre-eminence "the Seed" (Gal. iii. 16, 19), and who came "to destroy the works of the devil" (Heb. ii. 4; 1 John iii. 8). This we learn from the words which follow, and which, not obscurely, point to a seed which should be individual and personal. **It**—or he; *αὐτος* (LXX.); not *ipsa* (Vulgate, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory the Great; later Romish interpreters understanding the Virgin)—**shall bruise.** 1. Shall crush, trample down—rendering שׁוּף by *terere* or *conterere* (Vulgate, Syriac, Samaritan, Tuch, Baumgarten, Keil, Kalisch). 2. Shall pierce, wound, bite—taking the verb as = שָׁפַף, to bite (Fürst, Calvin). 3. Shall watch, lie in wait = שָׁאַף (LXX., *τηρήσει*—Wordsworth suggests as the correct reading *τερήσει*, from *τερέω*, *perforo, vulnero* — Gesenius, Knobel). The word occurs only in two other places in Scripture—Job ix. 17; Ps. cxxxix. 11—and in the latter of these the reading is doubtful (cf. Perowne on Ps. *in loco*). Hence the difficulty of deciding with absolute certainty between these rival interpretations. Ps. xci. 13 and Rom. xvi. 20 appear to sanction the first; the second is favoured by the application of the same word to the hostile action of the serpent, which is not treading, but biting; the feebleness of the third is its chief objection. **Thy head.** *I. e.* the superior part of thee (Calvin), meaning that the serpent would be completely destroyed, the head of the reptile being that part of its body in which a wound was most dangerous, and which the creature itself instinctively protects; or the import of the expression may be, He shall attack thee in a bold and manly way (T. Lewis). **And thou shalt bruise his heel.** *I. e.* the inferior part (Calvin), implying that in the conflict he would be wounded, but not destroyed; or "the biting of the heel may denote the mean, insidious character of the devil's warfare" (T. Lewis).

Ver. 16.—**Unto the woman he said.** Passing judgment on her first who had sinned first, but cursing neither her nor her husband, as "being candidates for restoration" (Tertullian). The sentence pronounced on Eve was twofold. **I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception.** A hendiadys for "the sorrow of thy conception" (Gesenius, Bush), though this is not necessary. The womanly and wifely sorrow of Eve was to be intensified, and in particular the pains of parturition were to be multiplied (cf. Jer. xxxi. 8). The second idea is more fully explained in the next clause. **In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.** Literally, *sons*, daughters being included. The pains of childbirth are in Scripture emblematic of the severest anguish both of body and mind (cf. Ps. xlviii. 7; Micah iv. 9, 10; 1 Thess. v. 3; John xvi. 21; Rev. xii. 2). The gospel gives a special promise to mothers (1 Tim. ii. 15). "By bringing forth is also meant bringing up after the birth, as in ch. l. 23" (Ainsworth). **And thy desire** shall be **to thy husband.** תְּשׁוּקָה, from שׁוּק to run, to have a vehement longing for a thing, may have the same meaning here as in Cant. vii. 10 (Dathe, Rosenmüller, Delitzsch, Keil, Bohlen, Kalisch, Alford); but is better taken as expressive of deferential submissiveness, as in ch. iv. 7 (Luther, Calvin, Le Clerc, Lange, Macdonald, Speaker's 'Commentary'.) Following the LXX. (*ἀποστροφή*), Murphy explains it as meaning, "The determination of thy will shall be yielded to thy husband." According to the analogy of the two previous clauses, the precise import of this is expressed in the next, though by many it is regarded as a distinct item in the curse (Kalisch, Alford, Clarke, Wordsworth). **And he shall rule over thee.** Not merely a prophecy of woman's subjection, but an investiture of

man with supremacy over the woman; or rather a confirmation and perpetuation of that authority which had been assigned to the man at the creation. Woman had been given him as an helpmeet (ch. ii. 18), and her relation to the man from the first was constituted one of dependence. It was the reversal of this Divinely-established order that had led to the fall (ch. iii. 17). Henceforth, therefore, woman was to be relegated to, and fixed in, her proper sphere of subordination. On account of her subjection to man's authority a wife is described as the possessed or subjected one of a lord (ch. xx. 3; Deut. xx. 22), and a husband as the lord of a woman (Exod. xxi. 3). Among the Hebrews the condition of the female sex was one of distinct subordination, though not of oppression, and certainly not of slavery, as it it too often has been in heathen and Mohammedan countries. Christianity, while placing woman on the same platform with man as regards the blessings of the gospel (Gal. iii. 28), explicitly inculcates her subordination to the man in the relationship of marriage (Ephes. v. 22; Col. iii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 1).

Ver. 17.—**And unto Adam he said.** The noun here used for the first time without the article is explained as a proper name (Keil, Lange, Speaker's 'Commentary'), though perhaps it is rather designed to express the man's representative character (Macdonald). **Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife.** Preceding his sentence with a declaration of his guilt, which culminated in this, that instead of acting as his wife's protector prior to her disobedience, or as her mentor subsequent to that act, in the hope of bringing her to repentance, he became her guilty coadjutor through yielding himself to her persuasions. **And hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it.** For which a twofold judgment is likewise pronounced upon Adam. **Cursed is the ground.** *Ha' adamah*, out of which man was taken (ch. ii. 7); *i. e.* the soil outside of the garden. The language does not necessarily imply that now, for the first time, in consequence of the fall, the physical globe underwent a change, "becoming from that point onward a realm of deformity and discord, as before it was not, and displaying in all its sceneries and combinations the tokens of a broken constitution" (*vide* Bushnell, 'Nature and the Supernatural,' ch. vii.); simply it announces the fact that, because of the transgression of which he had been guilty, he would find the land beyond the confines of Eden lying under a doom of sterility (cf. Rom. viii. 20). **For thy sake.** בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ. 1. Because of thy sin it required to be such a world. 2. For thy good it was better that such a curse should lie upon the ground. Reading ד instead of ר, the LXX. translate ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις; and the Vulgate, *In opere tuo.* **In sorrow.** Literally, *painful labour* (cf. ver. 16; Prov. v. 10). **Shalt thou eat of it.** *I. e.* of its fruits (cf. Isa. i. 7; xxxvi. 16; xxxvii. 30). "Bread of sorrow" (Ps. cxxvii. 2) is bread procured and eaten amidst hard labour. **All the days of thy life.**

Ver. 18.—**Thorns also and thistles.** Terms occurring only here and in Hosea x. 8 = the similar expressions in Isa. v. 6; vii. 23 (Kalisch, Keil, Macdonald). **Shall it bring forth to thee.** *I. e.* these shall be its spontaneous productions; if thou desirest anything else thou must labour for it. **And thou shalt eat the herb of the field.** "Not the fruit of paradise" (Wordsworth), but "the lesser growths sown by his own toil" (Alford)—an intimation that henceforth man was "to be deprived of his former delicacies to such an extent as to be compelled to use, in addition, the herbs which had been designed only for brute animals;" and perhaps also "a consolation," as if promising that, notwithstanding the thorns and thistles, "it should still yield him sustenance" (Calvin).

Ver. 19.—**In the sweat of thy face** (so called, as having there its source and being there visible) **shalt thou eat bread.** *I. e.* all food (*vide* Job xxviii. 5; Ps. civ. 14; Matt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 36). "To eat bread" is to possess the means of sustaining life (Eccles. v. 16; Amos vii. 12). **Till thou return unto the ground** (the mortality of man is thus assumed as certain); **for out of it thou wast taken.** Not declaring the reason of man's dissolution, as if it were involved in his original material constitution, but reminding him that in consequence of his transgression he had forfeited the privilege of immunity from death, and must now return to the soil whence he sprung. Ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθης (LXX.); de qua sumptus es (Vulgate); "out of which thou wast taken" (Macdonald, Gesenius). On the use of כִּי as a relative pronoun = אֲשֶׁר cf. Gesenius, 'Lex. sub nom.,' who quotes this and ch. iv. 25 as examples. *Vide* also Stanley Leathes, 'Heb. Gram.,' p. 202; and 'Glassii Philologiæ,' lib. iii. tr. 2, c. xv. p. 335. This use of כִּי, however, appears to be doubtful, and is not necessary in any of the examples quoted.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 8—19.—*The first judgment scene.* I. THE FLIGHT OF THE CRIMINALS. 1. *It is the instinct of sinful men to flee from God.* "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God" (ver. 8). So "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah i. 3). (1) Through a consciousness of *guilt.* A perception of their nakedness caused our first parents to seek the shelter of the garden trees (ver. 10). Doubtless it was the burden lying on Jonah's conscience that sent him down into the ship's hold (Jonah i. 5). So awakened sinners ever feel themselves constrained to get away from God. (2) From a dread of *punishment.* Not perhaps so long as they imagine God to be either unacquainted with or indifferent to their offence, but immediately they apprehend that their wickedness is discovered (cf. Exod. ii. 15). The sound of Jehovah's voice as he came towards our first parents filled them with alarm. How much more will the full revelation of his glorious presence in flaming fire affright the ungodly! 2. *It is God's habit to pursue transgressors.* As he pursued Adam and Eve in the garden by his voice (ver. 9), and Jonah on the deep by a wind (Jonah i. 4), and David by his prophet (2 Sam. xii. 1), so does he still in his providence, and through the ministry of his word, and by his Spirit, follow after fleeing sinners—(1) to apprehend them (cf. Phil. iii. 12); (2) to forgive and *save* them (Luke xix. 10); (3) if they will not be forgiven, to *punish* them (2 Thess. i. 8). 3. *It is the certain fate of all fugitives to be eventually arrested.* Witness Adam and Eve (ver. 9), Cain (ch. iv. 9), David (2 Sam. xii. 1), Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 20), Jonah (ch. i. 6). Distance will not prevent (Ps. cxxxix. 7). Darkness will not hinder (Ps. cxxxix. 11). Secrecy will not avail (Heb. iv. 13). Material defences will not ward off the coming doom (Amos ix. 2, 3). The lapse of time will not make it less certain (Num. xxxii. 23).

II. THE EXAMINATION OF THE CRIMINALS. 1. *God's questions are always painfully direct and searching.* "Adam, where art thou?" (ver. 9). "Who told thee thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree?" (ver. 11). "What hast thou done?" (ver. 13). (1) Because he knows the fact of the sinner's guilt. The nature and aggravation, the time, circumstances, manner, and reason of the sinner's transgression are perfectly understood. (2) Because he aims at the sinner's conviction; *i. e.* he desires to bring sinners to a realisation of the sinfulness of their behaviour corresponding to that which he himself possesses. (3) Because he wishes to elicit a confession from the sinner's mouth. Without this there can be no forgiveness or salvation (Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 John i. 9). 2. *Man's apologies are always extremely weak and trifling.* (1) As attempting to excuse that which must for ever be inexcusable, viz., disobedience to God's commandment. Nothing can justify sin. God's authority over man being supreme, no one can relieve man from his responsibility to yield implicit submission to the Divine precepts. Jehovah's question rests special emphasis on the fact that Adam's sin was a transgression of his commandment (ver. 11). (2) As seeking to transfer the burden of guilt from himself to another. Adam blames his wife; Eve blames the serpent; and ever since, sinners have been trying to blame anything and everything except themselves—the companions God has given them; the circumstances in which God has placed them; the peculiar temperaments and dispositions with which God has endowed them. (3) As failing to obliterate the fact of transgression. Even Adam and Eve both discern as much as this. Beginning with apologies, they were obliged to end with avowal of their guilt. And if man can detect the worthlessness of his own hastily-invented pleas, much more, we may be sure, can God pierce through all the flimsy and trifling arguments that sinners offer to extenuate their faults. (4) As not requiring to be answered. It is remarkable that Jehovah does not condescend to answer either Adam or his wife; the reason being, doubtless, that any reply to their foolish speeches was unnecessary. 3. *The Divine verdict is always clear and convincing.* (1) Though in this case *unspoken,* it was yet *implied.* Adam and Eve did not require to be informed of their culpability. And neither will sinners need to be informed of their guilt and condemnation when they stand before the great white throne. It is a special mark of mercy that God informs sinners in the gospel of the nature of the verdict which has been pronounced

against them (John iii. 18, 19). (2) It was so *convincing* that it was *not denied.* Adam and Eve we can suppose were speechless. So was the disobedient wedding guest (Matt. xxii. 12). So will all the condemned be in the day of judgment (Rev. vi. 17).

III. THE SENTENCE OF THE CRIMINALS. 1. On the serpent—*judgment without mercy.* (1) Degradation on both the reptile and the tempter. (2) Hostility between the serpent's brood and the woman's seed. (3) Ultimate destruction of the tempter by the incarnation and death of the woman's seed. 2. On the sinning pair—*mercy, and then judgment.* (1) Mercy for both. *Great* mercy—the restitution of themselves and of their seed (or at least a portion of it) by the complete annihilation of their adversary through the sufferings of a distinguished woman's seed. *Certain* mercy—the entire scheme for their recovery was to depend on God, who here says, "I will put . . ." *Free* mercy—neither solicited nor deserved by Adam or his wife. (2) Judgment for each. For the *woman,* sorrow in accomplishing her womanly and wifely destiny, combined with a position of dependence on and submission to her husband. For the *man,* a life of sorrowful labour, a doom of certain death.

Learn—1. The folly of attempting to hide from God. It is better to flee to God than to run from God, even when we sin (Ps. cxliii. 9). 2. The expediency of confessing to God. It is always the shortest path to mercy and forgiveness (Ps. xxxii. 5). 3. The gentle treatment which men receive from God. Like David, we have all reason to sing of mercy as well as, and even rather than, judgment (Ps. ci. 1).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 8.—*The working of the sin-stricken conscience.* I. GOD THE JUDGE REVEALING HIMSELF. The *voice of the Lord God* represents to men the *knowledge* of themselves, which, like *light,* would be intolerable to the shamefaced.

II. MAN HIDING FROM THE JUDGE BECAUSE UNABLE TO MEET HIM. While the darkness of the thick foliage was regarded as a covering, hiding nakedness, it is yet from *the presence of the Lord God* that the guilty seek refuge.

III. MAN'S SELF AGAINST HIMSELF. The *instinctive* action of *shame* is a testimony to the moral nature and position of man. So it may be said—

IV. GUILT is itself God's witness, comprehending the *sense of righteousness* and the *sense of transgression* in the same being. (Perhaps there is a reference to the working of the conscience in the description of the voice of God as mingling in the facts of the natural world; "*the cool of the day*" being literally the "evening breeze," whose whispering sound became articulate to the ears of those who feared the personal presence of their Judge.)—R.

Ver. 9.—*The searching question.* We can picture the dread of this question. Have you considered its love—that it is really the first word of the gospel? Already the Shepherd goes forth to seek the lost sheep. The Bible shows us — 1. The original state of man; what God intended his lot to be. 2. The entry of sin, and fall from happiness. 3. The announcement and carrying out God's plan of restoration.

THE GOSPEL BEGINS not with the promise of a Saviour, but WITH SHOWING MAN HIS NEED. Thus (John iv. 15—18) our Saviour's answer to "Give me this water" was to convince of sin: "Go, call thy husband." That first loving call has never ceased. Men are still straying, still must come to themselves (Luke xv. 17). We hear it in the Baptist's teaching; in the preaching of St. Peter at Pentecost; and daily in his life-giving work the Holy Spirit's first step is to convince of sin. And not merely in conversion, but at every stage he repeats, "Where art thou?" To welcome God's gift we must feel our own need; and the inexhaustible treasures in Christ are discerned as we mark daily the defects of our service, and how far we are from the goal of our striving (Phil. iii. 13, 14). Hence, even in a Christian congregation, it is needful to press "Where art thou?" to lead men nearer to Christ. We want to stir up easy-going disciples, to make Christians consider their calling, to rouse to higher life and work. Our Saviour's call is, "Follow me." How are you doing this? You are pledged to be his soldiers; what reality is there in your

fighting? How many are content merely to do as others do! What do ye for Christ? You have your Bible; is it studied, prayed over? What do ye to spread its truth? Ye think not how much harm is done by apathy, how much silent teaching of unbelief there is in the want of open confession of Christ. Many are zealous for their own views. Where is the self-denying mind of Christ, the spirit of love? Many count themselves spiritual, consider that they have turned to the Lord, and are certainly in his fold. Where is St. Paul's spirit of watchfulness? (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27). "Where art thou?" May the answer of each be, Not shut up in myself, not following the multitude, but "looking unto Jesus."—M.

Vers. 14, 15.—*The doom of Satan and the hope of man.* I. THE DOOM OF DEGRADATION (ver. 14).

II. THE DOOM OF HOSTILITY (ver. 15). Three stages:—1. The enmity. 2. The conflict. 3. The victory.

Lessons:—1. See the wondrous mercy of God in proclaiming from the first day of sin, and putting into the forefront, a purpose of salvation. 2. Have we recognised it to the overcoming of the devil?—W.

Vers. 9—24.—*The word of God in the moral chaos.* These verses bring before us very distinctly the elements of man's sinful state, and of the redemptive dispensation of God which came out of it by the action of his brooding Spirit of life upon the chaos.

I. THE WORD OF GOD ADDRESSED TO THE PERSONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW WORLD. "The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, *Where art thou?*" Before that direct intercourse between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man there is no distinct recognition of the evil of sin, and no separation of its moral and physical consequences. The "*Where art thou?*" begins the spiritual work.

II. THE PROCESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN THE CONSCIENCE IS ONE THAT LEADS US FROM THE OUTSIDE CIRCLE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO THE INNERMOST CENTRE OF CONVICTION AND CONFESSION. "I was naked," "I was afraid," "I hid myself," "The woman gave me of the tree," "I did eat;" so at last we get to the *central fact*—I broke the commandment, I am guilty towards God. Each lays the blame on another—the man on the woman, the woman on the serpent. But the main fact is this, that when once the voice of God deals with us, when once the Spirit of light and life broods over the chaos, there will be truth brought out, and the beginning of all new creation is confession of sin. After all, both the transgressors admitted the fact: "*I did eat.*" Nor do they dare to state what is untrue, although they attempt to excuse themselves; for there may be a true confession of sin before there is a sense of its greatness and inexcusableness.

III. The transgression being clearly revealed, next comes THE DIVINE CONDEMNATION. It is upon the background of judgment that redemption must be placed, that it may be clearly seen to be of God's free grace. The *judgment upon the serpent* must be viewed as a fact in the sphere of *man's* world, not in the larger sphere of the *superhuman* suggested by the later use of the term "serpent." God's condemnation of Satan is only *shadowed forth* here, not actually described. The cursed *animal* simply represents the cursed *agent* or *instrument*, and therefore was intended to embody the curse of sin *to the eyes of man.* At the same time, the fifteenth verse must not be shorn of its spiritual application by a merely *naturalistic* interpretation. Man's inborn detestation of the serpent brood, and the serpent's lurking enmity against man, as it waits at his heel, is rightly taken as symbolically representing (1) the antagonism between good and evil introduced into the world by man's fall; (2) the necessity that that antagonism should be maintained; and (3) the purpose of God that it should be brought to an end by the destruction of the serpent, the removing out of the way both of the evil principle and of the besetments of man's life which have arisen out of it. This "*first promise*," as it is called, was not given in the form of a promise, but of a *sentence.* Are we not reminded of the cross, which itself was the carrying out of a *sentence*, but in which was included the redeeming mercy of God? *Life in death* is the mystery of Christ's sacrifice. "*It pleased the Lord to*

bruise him" (Isa. liii. 10). "*Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death,*" &c. (Heb. ii. 14). It must have been itself like a revelation of redeeming love that God pronounced sentence *first* upon the *serpent*, not upon *man*, thereby teaching him that he was in the sight of God a *victim* of the evil power, to be delivered by the victorious seed of the woman, rather than an *enemy* to be crushed and destroyed. The sentence seemed to say, Thou, *the serpent*, art the evil thing to be *annihilated; man* shall be *saved*, though wounded and bruised in the heel; the "*woman's seed*" shall be the conqueror,—which was the prediction of a renovation of humanity in a second Adam, a dim forecasting of the future, indeed, but a certain and unmistakable proclamation of the continuance of the race, notwithstanding sin and death; and in that continuance it was declared there should be a realisation of entire deliverance. The *sentence upon the woman,* which follows that upon the serpent, as she was the first in the transgression, is a sentence which, while it clearly demonstrates the evil of sin, at the same time reveals the mercy of God. The woman's sorrow is that which she can and does forget, for "joy that a man is born into the world." Her desire to her husband and her submission to his rule do come out of that fall of her nature in which she is made subject to the conditions of a fleshly life; but from the same earthly soil spring up the hallowed blossoms and fruits of the affections, filling the world with beauty and blessing. So have the law of righteousness and the law of love from the beginning blended together in the government of God. In like manner, the *sentence upon the man* is the same revelation of Divine goodness in the midst of condemnation. The ground is cursed for man's sake. *To thee* it shall bring forth thorns and thistles, *i. e.* thy labour shall not be the productive labour it would have been—thou shalt put it forth among difficulties and obstacles. Thou shalt see thine own moral perversity reflected in the stubborn barrenness, the wilderness growth of nature. Yet thou shalt eat the herb of the field, and depend upon it. With sweat of thy face all through thy life thou shalt win thy bread from an unwilling earth. And at last the dust beneath thy feet shall claim thee as its own; thy toil-worn frame shall crumble down into the grave. It was (1) a sentence of death, of death in life; but at the same time it was (2) a merciful appointment of man's most peaceful and healthy occupation—to till the ground, to grow the corn, to eat the bread; and it was (3) a proclamation of welcome release from the burden "when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." There is no allusion in any of these sentences to spiritual results of transgression, but that is only because the whole is a representation of the fall, *objectively regarded.* Just as the serpent is spoken of *as though* it were only an animal on the earth, so man's sin is spoken of *as though* it were only his life's error, to be paid for in his life's suffering; but as in the former case the deeper spiritual meaning lies behind the form of the serpent, so in the latter the condemnation which brings toil and suffering and death upon man's bodily frame brings upon his whole nature that which the external infliction symbolises and sets forth. The life goes down into the dust, but it is the life which by sin had become a smitten, cursed thing; that hiding of it in the dust is the end, so far as the mere sentence is concerned. We must, however, wait for the revelation which is to be made in the new man,—the life coming forth again,—which, though but dimly promised, is yet suggested in the story of paradise. Adam gave a new name to his wife when she became to him something more than "*a help-meet for him.*" He called her, first, *woman*, because she was taken out of man. He called her, afterwards, "*Eve,*" as the life-producing, "*because she was the mother of all living.*" The coats of skin—which were not, like the fig-leaves sewn together, man's own device for hiding shame, but God's preparation for preserving that reverence between the sexes so vital to the very continuance of the race itself—betokened again the mingling of mercy with judgment; for, apart altogether from any theory as to the slain animals whose skins were employed, the Divine origin of clothing is a most significant fact. When we are told that "the Lord God made them coats of skins, and clothed them," we must interpret the language from the standpoint of the whole narrative, which is that of an objective representation of the mysteries of man's primeval life. It would not be in harmony with the tone of the whole book to say in what method such Divine interposition was brought about. To the Biblical writers a spiritual guidance,

a work of God in the mind of man, is just as truly God's own act as though it were altogether apart from any human agency. The origin of clothing was an inspiration. Perhaps it is not putting too much into the language to see in such a fact an allusion to other facts. Man is directed to use skins; might he not have been directed to slay animals? If so, might not such slaughter of animals have been first connected with religious observances, for as yet there is no allusion to the use of animal food, save in the indirect form of dominion over the lower creation? In the fourth chapter, in the extra paradisaic life, the keeping of herds and flocks is mentioned as a natural sequel. Doubtless from the time of the fall the mode of life was entirely changed, as was its sphere. Before sin man was an animal indeed, but with his animal nature in entire subordination; after his fall he was under the laws of animal life, both as to its support and propagation. Death became the ruling fact of life, as it is in the mere animal races. Man is delivered from it only as he is lifted out of the animal sphere and becomes a child of God. The expulsion from Eden was part of the Divine sentence, but it was part of the redemptive work which commenced immediately upon the fall. The creature knowing good and evil by disobedience must not live for ever in that disobedience. He must die that he may be released from the burden of his corruption. An immortality of sin is not God's purpose for his creature. *Therefore* the Lord God shut up Eden.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 20.—**Arraigned**, convicted, judged, the guilty but pardoned pair prepare to leave their garden home—the woman to begin her experience of sorrow, dependence, and subjection; the man to enter upon his life career of hardship and toil, and both to meet their doom of certain, though it might be of long-delayed, death. The impression made upon their hearts by the Divine clemency, though not directly stated by the historian, may be inferred from what is next recorded as having happened within the precincts of Eden ere they entered on their exile. **And Adam called** (not prior to the fall, reading the verb as a pluperfect (Calvin), nor after the birth of Cain, transferring the present verse to ch. iv. 2 (Knobel), but subsequent to the promise of the woman's seed, and preceding their ejection from the garden) **his wife's name Eve.** *Chavvah*, from *chavvah* = *chayyah*, to live (cf. with the organic root *chvi* the Sanscrit, *giv;* Gothic, *quiv;* Latin, *vivo*, *gigno*, *vigeo;* Greek, *ζάω*, &c., the fundamental idea being to breathe, to respire —Fürst), is correctly rendered life—*ζωή* by the LXX., Josephus, Philo, Gesenius, Delitzsch, Macdonald, &c. Lange, regarding it as an abbreviated form of the participle *mechavvah*, understands it to signify "the sustenance, *i. e.* the propagation of life;" while Knobel, viewing it as an adjective, hints at woman's peculiar function—חַיָּה זֶרַע—to quicken seed (ch. xix. 32) as supplying the explanation. Whether appended by the narrator (Delitzsch, Lange) or uttered by Adam (Kalisch, Macdonald), the words which follow give its true import and exegesis. **Because she was the mother** (*am*—Greek, *μαμμα;* Welsh, *mani;* Copt., *man;* German and English, *mama;*—Gesenius) **of all living.** (1) Of Adam's children, though in this respect she might have been so styled from the beginning; and (2) of all who should truly live in the sense of being the woman's seed, as distinguished from the seed of the serpent. In Adam's giving a second name to his wife has been discerned the first assertion of his sovereignty or lordship over woman to which he was promoted subsequent to the fall (Luther), though this seems to be negatived by the fact that Adam exercised the same prerogative immediately on her creation; an act of thoughtlessness on the part of Adam, in that, "being himself immersed in death, he should have called his wife by so proud a name" (Calvin); a proof of his incredulity (Rupertus). With a juster appreciation of the spirit of the narrative, modern expositors generally regard it as a striking testimony to his faith.

Ver. 21.—**Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats** (*cathnōth*, from *cathan*, to cover; cf. *χιτών*; Sanscrit, *katam;* English, *cotton*) **of skin** (*'or*, the skin of a man, from *ūr*, to be naked, hence a hide). Neither their bodies (Origen), nor garments of the bark of trees (Gregory Nazianzen), nor miraculously-fashioned apparel (Grotius), nor clothing made from the serpent's skin (R. Jonathan), but tunics prepared from the skins of animals, slaughtered possibly for food, as it is not certain that the Edenic man was a vegetarian (ch. i. 29), though more probably slain in sacrifice. Though said to have been made by God, "it is not proper so to understand the words, as if God had been a furrier, or a servant to sew clothes" (Calvin); God being said to make or

do what he gives orders or instructions to be made or done. Willet and Macdonald, however, prefer to think that the garments were actually fashioned by God. Bush finds in the mention of Adam and his wife an intimation that they were furnished with different kinds of apparel, and suggests that on this fact is based the prohibition in Deut. xxii. 5 against the interchange of raiment between the sexes. **And clothed them.** "1. To show them how their mortal bodies might be defended from cold and other injuries. 2. To cover their nakedness for comeliness' sake; *vestimenta honoris* (Chaldee Paraphrase). 3. To teach them the lawfulness of using the beasts of the field, as for food, so for clothing. 4. To give a rule that modest and decent, not costly or sumptuous, apparel should be used. 5. That they might know the difference between God's works and man's invention—between coats of leather and aprons of leaves; and, 6. To put them in mind of their mortality by their raiment of dead beasts' skins—talibus indici oportebat peccatorem ut essent mortalitatis indicium: Origen" (Willet). 7. "That they might feel their degradation—quia vestes ex ea materia confectæ, belluinum quiddam magis saperent, quam lineæ vel laneæ—and be reminded of their sin" (Calvin). "As the prisoner, looking on his irons, thinketh on his theft, so we, looking on our garments, should think on our sins" (Trapp). 8. A foreshadowing of the robe of Christ's righteousness (Delitzsch, Macdonald, Murphy, Wordsworth, Candlish; cf. Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16; Isa. lxi. 10; Rom. xiii. 14; Ephes. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10). Bonar recognises in Jehovah Elohim at the gate of Eden, clothing the first transgressors, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as the High Priest of our salvation, had a right to the skins of the burnt offerings (Levit. vii. 8), and who, to prefigure his own work, appropriated them for covering the pardoned pair.

Ver. 22.—**And the Lord God said.** *Verba insultantis* (Augustine); *ironica reprobatio* (Calvin). But "irony at the expense of a wretched, tempted soul might well befit Satan, but not the Lord" (Delitzsch), and is altogether inconsistent with the footing of grace on which man was placed immediately upon his fall. **Behold, the man is become as one of us.** Not the angels (Kalisch), but the Divine Persons (cf. ch. i. 26). It is scarcely likely that Jehovah alludes to the words of the tempter (ch. iii. 5). **To know good and evil.** Implying an acquaintance with good and evil which did not belong to him in the state of innocence. The language seems to hint that a one-sided acquaintance with good and evil, such as that possessed by the first pair in the garden and the unfallen angels in heaven, is not so complete a knowledge of the inherent beauty of the one and essential turpitude of the other as is acquired by beings who pass through the experience of a fall, and that the only way in which a finite being can approximate to such a comprehensive knowledge of evil as the Deity possesses without personal contact—can see it as it lies everlastingly spread out before his infinite mind—is by going down into it and learning what it is through personal experience (cf. Candlish, *in loco*). **And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.** On the meaning of the tree of life *vide* ch. ii. 9. Neither (1) lest by eating of the fruit he should recover that immortal life which he no longer possessed (Kalisch), as "it is certain that man would not have been able, had he even devoured the whole tree, to enjoy life against the will of God" (Calvin); nor (2) lest the first pair, through participation of the tree, should confer upon themselves the attribute of *undyingness*, which would not be the ζωὴ αἰώνιος of salvation, but its opposite, the ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον of the accursed (Keil, Lange, T. Lewis, Wordsworth); but either (3) lest man should conceive the idea that immortality might still be secured by eating of the tree, instead of trusting in the promised seed, and under this false impression attempt to take its fruit, which, in his case, would have been equivalent to an attempt to justify himself by works instead of faith (Calvin, Macdonald); or (4) lest he should endeavour to partake of the symbol of immortality, which he could not again do until his sin was expiated and himself purified (cf. Rev. xxii. 14; Candlish). The remaining portion of the sentence is omitted, *anakoloutha* or aposiopesis being not infrequent in impassioned speech (cf. Exod. xxxii. 32; Job xxxii. 13; Isa. xxxviii. 18). The force of the ellipsis or expressive silence may be gathered from the succeeding words of the historian.

Vers. 23, 24.—**Therefore** (literally, and) **the Lord God sent** (or *cast*, *shalach* in the Piel conveying the ideas of force and displeasure; cf. Deut. xxi. 14; 1 Kings ix. 7) **him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground** (*i. e.* the soil outside of paradise, which had been cursed for his sake) **whence he was taken.** *Vide* ver. 19. **So** (and) **he drove out the man** (along with his guilty partner); **and he placed** (literally, caused to dwell) **at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim.** 1. *Griffins*, like those of Persian and Egyptian mythology, which protected gold-producing countries like Eden; from *carav*, to tear in pieces; Sanscrit, *grivh;* Persian, *giriften;* Greek, γρυπ, γρυφ; German, *grip, krip, greif* (Eichhorn, Fürst). 2. *Divine steeds;* by metathesis for *rechubim*, from *rachab*, to ride (Ps. xviii. 11; Gesenius, Lange). 3. "Beings who approach to God

and minister to him," taking *cerub* = *karov*, to come near, to serve (Hyde). 4. The engravings or carved figures; from *carav* (Syriac), to engrave (Tayler Lewis); from an Egyptian root (Cook, *vide* Speaker's Commentary). Biblical notices describe them as living creatures (Ezek. i. 5; Rev. iv. 6) in the form of a man (Ezek. i. 5), with four (Ezek. i. 8; ii. 23; x. 7, 8—21) or with six wings (Rev. iv. 8), and full of eyes (Ezek. i. 18; x. 12; Rev. iv. 8); having each four faces, viz., of a man, of a lion, of an ox, of an eagle (Ezek. i. 10; x. 16); or with one face each—of a man, of a lion, of a calf, and of an eagle respectively (Rev. iv. 7). Representations of these *chay'ath*—LXX., ζῶα—were by Divine directions placed upon the Capporeth (Exod. xxv. 17) and curtains of the tabernacle (Exod. xxvi. 1, 31; xxxvi. 8, 35), and afterwards engraved upon the walls and doors of the temple (1 Kings vi. 29, 32, 35). In the Apocalypse they are depicted as standing in the immediate neighbourhood of the throne (Rev. iv. 6; v. 6; vii. 11), and as taking part in the acts of adoration and praise in which the heavenly hosts engage (*ibid.* v. 11), and that on the express ground of their redemption (*ibid.* v. 8, 9). Whence the opinion that most exactly answers all the facts of the case is, that these mysterious creatures were *symbolic* not of the fulness of the Deity (Bahr), nor of the sum of earthly life (Hengstenberg), nor of the angelic nature (Calvin), nor of the Divine manhood of Jesus Christ (Wordsworth), but *of redeemed and glorified humanity* (Jamieson, Fairbairn, Macdonald, Candlish). Combining with the intelligence of human nature the highest qualities of the animal world, as exhibited in the lion, the ox, and the eagle, they were emblematic of creature life in its most absolutely perfect form. As such they were caused to dwell at the gate of Eden to intimate that only when perfected and purified could fallen human nature return to paradise. Meantime man was utterly unfit to dwell within its fair abode. **And a flaming sword, which turned every way.** Literally, *the flame of a sword turning itself;* not brandished by the cherubim, but existing separately, and flashing out from among them (cf. Ezek. i. 4). An emblem of the Divine glory in its attitude towards sin (Macdonald). **To keep** (to watch over or guard; cf. ch. ii. 15) **the way of the tree of life.** "To keep the tree of life might imply that all access to it was to be precluded; but to keep *the way* signifies to keep the way *open* as well as to keep it *shut*" (Macdonald).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 20—24.—*First fruits of the promise.* I. Faith (ver. 20). The special significance of Adam's renaming his wife at this particular juncture in his history is best discerned when the action is regarded as the response of his faith to the antecedent promise of the woman's seed. 1. It is the *place* of faith to succeed, and not to precede, the promise. Faith being, in its simplest conception, belief in a testimony, the testimony must ever take precedence of the faith. "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephes. i. 13). 2. As to the *genesis* of faith, it is always evoked by the promise, not the promise by the faith. Adam's faith was the creation of God's promise; so is that of every true believer. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). 3. With regard to the *function* of faith, it is not that of certifying or making sure the promise, but simply of attesting its certainty, which it does by reposing trust in its veracity. "He that receiveth his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John iii. 33). And this was practically what was done by Adam when he called his wife's name Eve. 4. The *power* of faith is seen in this, that while it cannot implement, it is able to anticipate the promise, and, as it were, to enjoy it beforehand, in earnest at least, as Adam did when he realised that his spouse should be the mother of all living. Even so "faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1).

II. Acceptance (ver. 21). 1. In the Divine scheme of salvation *acceptance ever follows on the exercise of faith.* See the language of the New Testament generally on the subject of a sinner's justification. The covering of our first parents with coats of skin, apart altogether from any symbolical significance in the act, could scarcely be regarded as other than a token of Jehovah's favour. 2. According to the same scheme *the clothing of a sinner ever accompanies the act of his acceptance.* In New Testament theology the Divine act of justification is always represented as proceeding on the ground that in the eye of God the sinner stands invested with a complete covering (the righteousness of Christ) which renders him both legally and morally acceptable.

That all this was comprehended with perfect fulness and clearness by the pardoned pair it would be foolish to assert; but, in a fashion accommodated to their simple intelligences, the germ of this doctrine was exhibited by the coats of skin with which they were arrayed, and it is at least possible that they had a deeper insight into the significance of the Divine action than we are always prepared to allow. 3. In the teaching of the gospel scheme *the providing of a sinner with such a covering as he requires must ever be the work of God.* Though not improbable that the coats of skin were furnished by the hides of animals, now for the first time offered in sacrifice by Divine appointment, the simple circumstance that they were God-provided, apart from any other consideration, was sufficient to suggest the thought that only God could supply the covering which was needed for their sin.

III. DISCIPLINE (vers. 22—24). Rightly interpreted, neither the language of Jehovah nor that of Moses warrants the idea that the expulsion was designed as a penal infliction; but rather as a measure mercifully intended and wisely adapted for the spiritual edification of the pardoned pair. Three elements were present in it that are seldom absent from the discipline of saints. 1. *Removal of comforts.* The initial act in the discipline of Adam and his wife was to eject them from the precincts of Eden. And so oftentimes does God begin the work of sanctification in his people's hearts by the infliction of loss. In the case of Adam and his spouse there were special reasons demanding their removal from the garden, as, *e. g.*, (1) its non-suitability as a home for them now that their pure natures were defiled by sin; and (2) the danger of their continuing longer in the vicinity of the tree of life. And the same two reasons will frequently be found to explain God's dealings with his people when he inflicts upon them loss of creature comforts; the non-suitability of those comforts to their wants as spiritual beings; and the presence of some special danger in the things removed. 2. *Increase of sorrow.* Besides being ejected from the garden, the first pair were henceforth to be subjected to toil and trouble. Adam in tilling the ground, and Eve in bearing children. And this, too, was a part of God's educational process with our first parents; as, indeed, the sufferings of this present life inflicted on his people generally are all commissioned on a like errand, viz., to bring forth within them the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to make them partakers of his holiness. 3. *Sentence of death.* The words "whence he was taken" have an echo in them of "dust thou art," &c., and must have extinguished within the breasts of Adam and his wife all hope of returning to Eden on this side the grave; perhaps, too, would assist them in seeking for a better country, even an heavenly. To prevent saints from seeking Edens on the earth seems to be one of the main designs of death.

IV. HOPE (ver. 24). Though excluded from the garden, man was not without cheering ingredients of hope in his condition. 1. *The Divine presence was still with him.* The cherubim and flaming sword were symbols of the ineffable majesty of Jehovah, and tokens of his presence. And never since has the world been abandoned by the God of mercy and salvation. 2. *Paradise was still reserved for him.* The cherubim and flaming sword were appointed "to keep the way of the tree of life;" not simply to guard the entrance, but to protect the place. So is heaven a reserved inheritance (1 Pet. i. 4). 3. *The prospect of readmission to the tree of life was yet before him.* As much as this was implied in the jealous guarding of the gate so long as Adam was defiled by sin. It could not fail to suggest the idea that when purified by life's discipline he would no longer be excluded (cf. Rev. xxii. 14). 4. *The gate of heaven was still near him.* He was still permitted to reside in the vicinity of Eden, and to commune with him who dwelt between the cherubim, though denied the privilege as yet of dwelling with him in the interior of his abode. If debarred from the full inheritance, he had at least its earnest. And exactly this is the situation of saints on earth, who, unlike those within the veil, who see the Lord of the heavenly paradise face to face, can only commune with him, as it were, at the gate of his celestial palace.

Learn—1. To believe God's promise of salvation. 2. To be grateful for God's gift of righteousness. 3. To submit with cheerfulness to God's paternal discipline. 4. To live in hope of entering God's heaven.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 21.—*Covering.* God's chief promises generally accompanied by visible signs or symbolical acts; *e. g.*, bow in the cloud, furnace and lamp (Gen. xv. 17), passover, &c. The time here spoken of specially called for such a sign. Man had fallen; a Deliverer was promised; it was the beginning of a state of grace for sinners. Notice four facts:—1. Man unfallen required no covering. 2. Man fallen became conscious of need, especially towards God. 3. He attempted himself to provide clothing. 4. God provided it. Spiritual meaning of clothing (Rev. iii. 18; vii. 14; 2 Cor. v. 3). And note that the root of "atonement" in Hebrew is "to cover." Thus the covering is a type of justification; God's gift to convicted sinners (cf. Zech. iii. 4, 5; Luke xv. 22; and the want of this covering, Matt. xxii. 11). With Adam's attempt and God's gift compare the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Abel's sacrifice of life accepted through faith (Heb. xi. 4), *i. e.* because he believed and acted upon God's direction. Thus atonement, covering, through the sacrifice of life (cf. Levit. xvii. 11), typical of Christ's sacrifice, must have been ordained of God. And thus, though not expressly stated, we may conclude that Adam was instructed to sacrifice, and that the skins from the animals thus slain were a type of the covering of sin through the one great sacrifice (Rom. iv. 7). We mark then—

I. THE HELPLESSNESS OF MAN TO SAVE HIMSELF FROM SIN. The natural thought of a heart convicted is, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." Vain endeavour. The "law of sin" (Rom. vii. 21, 24) is too strong; earnest striving only makes this more clear (cf. Job ix. 30; Isa. lxiv. 6). History is full of man's efforts to cover sins. Hence have come sacrifices, austerities, pilgrimages, &c. But on all merely human effort is stamped failure (Rom. iii. 20).

II. THE LOVE OF GOD FOR SINNERS (Rom. v. 8). A common mistake that if we love God he will love us. Whereas the truth is, 1 John iv. 10—19. We must believe his free gift before we can serve him truly. The want of this belief leads to service in the spirit of bondage.

III. THE PROVISION MADE BY GOD (John iii. 14—17). That we might be not merely forgiven, but renewed (2 Cor. v. 21). The consciousness that "Christ hath redeemed us" is the power that constrains to willing service (1 John iii. 3).—M.

Ver. 24.—*The dispensation of redemption.* Notice—

I. THE MERCY WITH JUDGMENT. He did not destroy the garden; he did not root up its trees and flowers.

II. He "DROVE OUT THE MAN" into his curse that he might pray for and seek for and, at last, by Divine grace, obtain once more his forfeited blessing.

III. AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN HE PLACED THE CHERUBIMS AND THE FLAMING SWORD TURNING EVERY WAY, emblems of his natural and moral governments, which, as they execute his righteous will amongst men, do both debar them from perfect happiness and yet at the same time testify to the fact that there is such happiness for those who are prepared for it. Man outside Eden is man under law, but man under law is man *preserved* by Divine mercy.

IV. The PRESERVING MERCY IS THE REDEEMING MERCY. The redemption is more than deliverance from condemnation and death; it is *restoration to eternal life.* "*Paradise lost*" is not *paradise destroyed*, but shall be hereafter "*paradise regained.*"

V. There is a special significance in the description of "THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE" as *closed* and *guarded*, and therefore a way which can be afterwards *opened* and made *free.*

VI. Without pressing too closely figurative language, it is impossible, surely, to ignore in such a representation the reference to a POSITIVE REVELATION as the MEDIUM OF HUMAN DELIVERANCE AND RESTORATION. The whole of the Scripture teaching rests upon that foundation, that there is "*a way, a truth, and a life*" which is Divinely distinguished from all others. Gradually that eastward gate of Eden has been opened, that road leading into the centre of bliss has been made clear in "*the man Christ Jesus.*"—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1.—Exiled from Eden, o'er-canopied by grace, animated by hope, assured of the Divine forgiveness, and filled with a sweet peace, the first pair enter on their life experience of labour and sorrow, and the human race begins its onward course of development in sight of the mystic cherubim and flaming sword. **And Adam knew Eve, his wife.** *I. e.* "recognised her nature and uses" (Alford; cf. Num. xxxi. 17). The act here mentioned is recorded not to indicate that paradise was "non nuptiis, sed virginitate destinatum" (Jerome), but to show that while Adam was formed from the soil, and Eve from a rib taken from his side, the other members of the race were to be produced "neque ex terra neque quovis alio modo, sed ex conjunctione maris et fœminæ" (Rungius). **And she conceived.** The Divine blessing (ch. i. 28), which in its operation had been suspended during the period of innocence, while yet it was undetermined whether the race should develope as a holy or a fallen seed, now begins to take effect (cf. ch. xviii. 14; Ruth iv. 13; Heb. xi. 11). **And bare Cain.** *Acquisition* or *Possession*, from *kanah*, to acquire (Gesenius). Cf. Eve's exclamation. Kalisch, connecting it with *kûn* or *kīn*, to strike, sees an allusion to his character and subsequent history as a murderer, and supposes it was not given to him at birth, but at a later period. Tayler Lewis falls back upon the primitive idea of the root, to create, to procreate, generate, of which he cites as examples ch. xiv. 19, 22; Deut. xxxii. 6, and takes the derivative to signify the *seed*, explaining Eve's exclamation *kanīthī kain* as equivalent to τετοκα τοκον, *genui genitum* or *generationem*. **And said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.** The popular interpretation, regarding *kanithi* as the emphatic word in the sentence, understands Eve to say that her child was a thing achieved, an acquisition gained, either from the Lord (Onkelos, Calvin) or by means of, with the help of, the Lord (LXX., Vulgate, Jerome, Dathe, Keil), or for the Lord (Syriac). If, however, the emphatic term is Jehovah, then *eth* with Makkeph following will be the sign of the accusative, and the sense will be, "I have gotten a man—Jehovah" (Jonathon, Luther, Baumgarten, Lewis); to which, perhaps, the chief objections are—(1) that it appears to anticipate the development of the Messianic idea, and credits Eve with too mature Christological conceptions (Lange), though if Enoch in the seventh generation recognised Jehovah as the coming One, why might not Eve have done so in the first? (Bonar); (2) that if the thoughts of Eve had been running so closely on the identity of the coming Deliverer with Jehovah, the child would have been called Jehovah, or at least some compound of Jehovah, such as Ishiah—אִישׁ and יהוה—or Coniah—קין and יהוה (Murphy); (3) si scivit Messiam esse debet Jovam, quomodo existimare potuit Cainam esse Messiam, quem sciebat esse ab Adamo genitum? (Dathe); and (4) that, while it might not be difficult to account for the mistake of a joyful mother in supposing that the fruit of her womb was the promised seed, though, "if she did believe so, it is a caution to interpreters of prophecy" (Inglis), it is not so easy to explain her belief that the promised seed was to be Jehovah, since no such announcement was made in the Protevangel. But whichever view be adopted of the construction of the language, it is obvious that Eve's utterance was the dictate of faith. In Cain's birth she recognised the earnest and guarantee of the promised seed, and in token of her faith gave her child a name (cf. ch. iii. 20), which may also explain her use of the Divine name *Jehovah* instead of *Elohim*, which she employed when conversing with the serpent. That Eve denominates her infant a man has been thought to indicate that she had previously borne daughters who had grown to womanhood, and that she expected her young and tender babe to reach maturity. Murphy thinks this opinion probable; but the impression conveyed by the narrative is that Cain was the first-born of the human family.

Ver. 2.—**And she again bare** (literally, *added to bear*, a Hebraism adopted in the New Testament; *vide* Luke xx. 11) **his brother Abel.** *Habel* (vanity), supposed to hint either that a mother's eager hopes had already begun to be disappointed in her elder son, or that, having in her first child's name given expression to her faith, in this she desired to preserve a monument of the miseries of human life, of which, perhaps, she had been forcibly reminded by her own maternal sorrows. Perhaps also, though unconsciously, a melancholy prophecy of his premature removal by the hand of fratricidal rage, to which it has been thought there is an outlook by the historian in the frequent (seven times repeated) and almost pathetic mention of the fact that Abel was Cain's brother. The absence of the usual expression וַתַּהַר, as well as the peculiar phraseology *et addidit parere* has suggested that Abel was Cain's twin brother (Calvin, Kimchi, Candlish), though this

is not necessarily implied in the text. **And Abel was a keeper of sheep** (ποιμὴν προβάτων, LXX.; the latter term includes goats—Levit. i. 10), **but Cain was a tiller of the ground.** These occupations, indirectly suggested by God in the command to till the ground and the gift of the clothes of skin (Keil), were doubtless both practised by the first man, who would teach them to his sons. It is neither justifiable nor necessary to trace a difference of moral character in the different callings which the young men selected, though probably their choices were determined by their talents and their tastes. Ainsworth sees in Abel a figure of Christ "in shepherdy as in sacrificing and martyrdom."

Ver. 3.—**And in process of time.** Literally, *at the end of the days*, i. e.—1. Of the year (Aben Ezra, Dathe, De Wette, Rosenmüller, Bohlen), at which season the feast of the ingathering was afterwards kept—Exod. xxiii. 16 (Bush). Aristotle, 'Ethics,' viii. 2, notes that anciently sacrifices were offered after the gathering of the fruits of the earth (Ainsworth). 2. Of the week (Candlish). 3. Of an indefinite time, years or days (Luther, Kalisch). 4. Of some set time, as the beginning of their occupations (Knobel). **It came to pass** (literally, it was) **that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering.** Θυσία, LXX.; *oblatio*, Vulgate; *speis-opfer*, Luther. The *mincha* of Hebrew worship was a bloodless sacrifice, consisting of flour and oil, or flour prepared with frankincense (Levit. ii. 1). All tree fruits and garden produce were excluded; it was limited to the productions of agriculture and vine growing (cf. Kurtz, 'Sacrificial Worship,' § 140). Here it includes both meat offerings and animal sacrifices (cf. ver. 4). **Unto the Lord.** Probably to the gate of the garden, where the cherubim and flaming sword were established as the visible monuments of the Divine presence.

Ver. 4.—**And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock.** Either the firstborn, which God afterwards demanded (Exod. xiii. 12), or the choicest and best (Job xviii. 13; Jer. xxxi. 19; Heb. xii. 23). **And the fat thereof.** Literally, *the fatness of them*, i. e. the fattest of the firstlings, "the best he had, and the best of those best" (Inglis; cf. Gen. xlv. 18; Num. xviii. 2; Ps. clxvii. 14); a proof that flesh was eaten before the Flood, since "it had been no praise to Abel to offer the fatlings if he used not to eat of them" (Willet), and "si anteposuit Abel utilitate suæ Deum, non dubium quia solitus sit ex labore suo utilitatem percipere" (Justin). **And the Lord had respect.** Literally, *looked upon;* ἐπεῖδεν, LXX. (cf. Num. xvi. 15); probably consuming it by fire from heaven, or from the flaming sword (cf. Levit. ix. 24; 1 Chron. xxi. 26; 2 Chron. vii. 1; 1 Kings xviii. 38; Jerome, Chrysostom, Cyril). Theodotion renders ἐνεπύρισεν, *inflammant;* and Heb. xi. 4, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις, is supposed to lend considerable weight to the opinion. **Unto Abel and his offering.** Accepting first his person and then his gift (cf. Prov. xii. 2; xv. 8; 2 Cor. viii. 12). "The sacrifice was accepted for the man, and not the man for the sacrifice" (Ainsworth); but still "without a doubt the words of Moses imply that the matter of Abel's offering was more excellent and suitable than that of Cain's," and one can hardly entertain a doubt that this was the idea of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Prof. Lindsay, 'Lectures on Hebrews,' Edin. 1867). Abel's sacrifice was πλείονα, fuller than Cain's; it had more in it; it had faith, which was wanting in the other. It was also offered in obedience to Divine prescription. The universal prevalence of sacrifice rather points to Divine prescription than to man's invention as its proper source. Had Divine worship been of purely human origin, it is almost certain that greater diversity would have prevailed in its forms. Besides, the fact that the mode of worship was not left to human ingenuity under the law, and that will-worship is specifically condemned under the Christian dispensation (Col. ii. 23), favours the presumption that it was Divinely appointed from the first.

Ver. 5.—**But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.** Because of the absence of those qualities which distinguished Abel and his offering; not because the heart of Cain was "no more pure," but "imbued with a criminal propensity" (Kalisch), which it was not until his offering was rejected. The visible sign, whatever it was, being awanting in the case of Cain's oblation, its absence left the offerer in no dubiety as to the Divine displeasure with both himself and his offering. In the rejection of Cain's offering Bohlen sees the animus of a Levitical narrator, who looks down slightingly on offerings of the fruits and flowers of earth; but, as Havernick well remarks, the theocracy was essentially based on agriculture, while the Mosaic institute distinctly recognised the legality and value of bloodless offerings. **And Cain was very wroth** (literally, *it burned with Cain exceedingly*), **and his countenance fell.** In fierce resentment against his brother, possibly in disappointed rage against himself, almost certainly in anger against God (cf. Neh. vi. 16; Job xxix. 24; Jer. iii. 12, and contrast Job xi. 15). There was apparently no sorrow for sin, "no spirit of inquiry, self-examination, prayer to God for light or pardon, clearly showing that Cain was far from a right state of mind" (Murphy). Yet the Lord does not forthwith abandon the contumacious and insensate

transgressor, but patiently expostulates with and instructs him as to how he too might obtain the same blessing of acceptance which his younger brother enjoyed.

Vers. 6, 7—**And the Lord** (Jehovah) **said unto Cain.** Speaking either mediately by Adam (Luther), or more probably directly by his own voice from between the cherubim where the flaming sword, the visible symbol of the Divine presence, had been established (cf. Exod. xx. 24). **Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?** The ensuing verse is a veritable *crux interpretum*, concerning which the greatest diversity of sentiment exists. Passing by the manifest mistranslation of the LXX., "If thou hast offered rightly, but hast not divided rightly, hast thou not sinned? Rest quiet; toward thee is his (or its) resort, and thou shalt rule over him (or it)," which Augustine, Ambrose, and Chrysostom followed, at the same time "wearying themselves with many interpretations, and being divided among themselves as to how Cain divided not rightly" (Willet), the different opinions that have been entertained as to the meaning of its several clauses, their connection, and precise import when united, may be thus exhibited. **If thou doest well.** Either (1) if thou wert innocent and sinless (Candlish, Jamieson), or (2) if thou, like Abel, presentest a right offering in a right spirit (Vulgate, Luther, Calvin), or (3) if thou retrace thy steps and amend thine offering and intention (Willet, Murphy). **Shalt thou not be accepted?** Literally, *Is there not lifting up?* (*seāth*, from *nasa*, to raise up). Either—1. Of the *countenance* (Gesenius, Fürst, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Knobel, Lange, Delitzsch). 2. Of the *sacrifice*, viz., by acceptance of it (Calvin); akin to which are the interpretations—Is there not a lifting up of the burden of guilt? Is there not forgiveness? (Luther); Is there not acceptance with God? (Speaker's Commentary); Is there not a bearing away of blessing? (Ainsworth). Vulgate, Shalt thou not receive? (sc. the Divine favour). "Verum quamvis נָשָׂא עָוֹן peccatum condonare significet, nusquam tamen שְׂאֵת veniam sonat" (Rosen.). 3. Of the *person*, i. e. by establishing Cain's pre-eminency as the elder brother, to which reference is clearly made in the concluding clause of the verse (Bush). **And if thou doest not well, sin**—*chattath*, from *chata*, to miss the mark like an archer, properly signifies a sin (Exod. xxviii. 9; Isa. vi. 27; cf. Greek, ἄτη); also a sin offering (Levit. vi. 18, 23); also penalty (Zech. xiv. 19), though this is doubtful. Hence it has been taken to mean in this place—1. Sin (Dathe, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Wordsworth, Speaker's Commentary, Murphy). 2. The punishment of sin (Onkelos, Grotius, Cornelius à Lapide, Ainsworth), the guilt of sin, the sense of unpardoned transgression; "interius conscientiæ judicium, quod hominem convictum sui peccati undique obsessum premit" (Calvin). 3. A sin offering (Lightfoot, Poole, Magee, Candlish, Exell)—**lieth** (literally, *lying; robets*, from *rabats*, to couch as a beast of prey; cf. ch. XXIX. 2; xlix. 9) **at the door.** Literally, at the opening = at the door *of the conscience*, expressive of the nearness and severity of the Divine retribution (Calvin); *of the soul*, indicating the close contiguity of the devouring monster sin to the evil-doer (Kalisch); *of paradise* (Bonar); *of Abel's fold* (Exell), suggesting the locality where a sacrificial victim might be obtained; *of the house*, conveying the ideas of publicity and certainty of detection for the transgressor whose sin, though lying asleep, was only sleeping at the door, *i. e.* "in a place where it will surely be disturbed; and, therefore, it is impossible but that it must be awoke and roused up, when as a furious beast it will lay hold on thee" (Luther); *h. e.* "statim se prodet, peccatum tuum non magis celari potest, quam id quod pro foribus jacet" (Rosenmüller). **And unto thee** shall be **his**—*i. e.* (1) Abel's (LXX. (?), Chrysostom, Ambrose, Grotius, Calvin, Ainsworth, Bush, Speaker's, Bonar, Exell); or (2) sin's (Vulgate (?), Luther, Rosenmüller, Von Bohlen, Kalisch, Keil, Delitzsch, Murphy); or (3) the sin offering's (Faber, Candlish)—**desire** (*vide* ch. iii. 16), **and thou shalt rule over him.** *I. e.*, according to the interpretation adopted of the preceding words—(1) thou shalt maintain thy rights of primogeniture over Abel, who, as younger son, shall be obsequious and deferential towards thee; or, (2) "the entire submission and service of sin will be yielded to thee, and thou shalt make thyself master of it," *sc.* by yielding to it and being hurried on to greater wickedness—a warning against the downward course of sin (Murphy); or, while sin lurks for thee like a beast of prey, and "the demon of allurement" thirsts for thee to gratify thy passion, thou shalt (or mayst) rule over it, *sc.* by giving up thy wrath and restraining thine evil propensities—a word of hopeful encouragement to draw the sinner back to holy paths (Keil); or, "peccatum tanquam mulier impudica sistitur, quæ hominem ad libidinem suam explendam tentet, cui igitur resistere debeat" (Rosenmüller); or, (3) the sacrificial victim is not far to seek, it is already courting thine acceptance, and thou mayst at once avail thyself of it (Candlish). Of the various solutions of this "difficillimus locus," all of which are plausible, and none of which are entirely destitute of support, that appears the most entitled to acceptance which, excluding any reference

either to Abel or to a sin offering, regards the language as warning Cain against the dangers of yielding to sin.

Ver. 8.—**And Cain talked with** (literally, *said to*) **his brother.** Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πεδίον (LXX.); *egrediamur foras* (Vulgate). The Samaritan and Syriac versions interpolate to the same effect. The Jerusalem Targum explains—"Cainum cum Abele contendisse de vita æterna, de extremo judicio, et providentia divina," inserting a long conversation commencing, "Veni, egrediamur ad superficiem agri;" but the obvious supplement is to be found in the subject matter of the previous verse (Hieronymus, Aben Ezra, Gesenius). It is not against this that it argues too much moral goodness in Cain to suppose that he would tell his younger brother of Jehovah's admonition (Knobel); and it certainly relieves us from the necessity of adding to the moral turpitude of the unhappy fratricide by depicting him as deliberately planning his favoured brother's murder, carrying the fell purpose within his guilty bosom, watching his opportunity (Böttcher and Knobel, who substitute שָׁמַר, *he watched*, for אָמַר, *he said*), and at last accomplishing his unhallowed purpose by means of treachery. Beyond all question the historian designs to describe not an act of culpable homicide, but a deed of red-handed murder; yet the impression which his language conveys is that of a crime rather suddenly conceived and hurriedly performed than deliberately planned and treacherously executed. **And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.**

Ver. 9.—**And the Lord said unto Cain.** "Probably soon after the event, at the next time of sacrifice, and at the usual place of offering" (Bonar). **Where is Abel thy brother?** "A question fitted to go straight to the murderer's conscience, and no less fitted to rouse his wrathful jealousy, as showing how truly Abel was the beloved one" (*ibid*). Whether spoken by Adam (Luther), or whispered within his breast by the still small voice of conscience, or, as is most probable, uttered from between the cherubim, Cain felt that he was being examined by a Divine voice (Calvin). **And** (in reply) **he said** (adding falsehood, effrontery, and even profanity to murder), **I know not: am I my brother's keeper?** The inquiry neither of ignorance nor of innocence, but the desperate resort of one who felt himself closely tracked by avenging justice and about to be convicted of his crime. "He showeth himself *a lyer* in saying, 'I know not;' *wicked and profane* in thinking he could hide his sin from God; *unjust* in denying himself to be his brother's keeper; *obstinate and desperate* in not confessing his sin" (Willet; cf. Ps. x.).

Ver. 10.—Satisfied that the guilty fratricide is resolved to make no acknowledgment of his deed, the omniscient Judge proceeds to charge him with his sin. **And he**—*i. e.* Jehovah—**said, What hast thou done?** Thus intimating his perfect cognisance of the fact which his prisoner was attempting to deny. What a revelation it must have been to the inwardly trembling culprit of the impossibility of eluding the besetting God! (Ps. cxxxix. 5). **The voice of thy brother's blood** (literally, bloods, *i. e.* of this and all subsequent martyrs—Chald. Par.) **crieth unto me.** A common Scriptural expression concerning murder and other crimes (ch. xviii. 20, 21; xix. 13; Exod. iii. 9; Heb. xii. 24; James v. 4). The blood crying is a symbol of the soul crying for its right to live (Lange). In this instance the cry was a demand for the punishment of the murderer; and that cry has reverberated through all lands and down through all ages, proclaiming vengeance against the shedder of innocent blood (cf. ch. ix. 5). "Hence the prayer that the earth may not drink in the blood shed upon it, in order that it may not thereby become invisible and inaudible" (Knobel). Cf. Job xvi. 18; Isa. xxvi. 21; Ezek. xxiv. 7; also Eschylus, 'Chœphoræ,' 310, 398 (quoted by T. Lewis in Lange). **From the ground.** Into which it had disappeared, but not, as the murderer hoped, to become forgotten.

Vers. 11, 12.—Convicted, if not humbled, the culprit is speechless, and can only listen in consternation to the threefold judgment which pronounced him "cursed in his soul, vagabond in his body, and unprosperous in his labours" (Willet). **And now**—either *at this time*, already (cf. Josh. xiv. 11; Hosea ii. 10), or *for this cause*, because thou hast done this (ch. iii. 14; cf. ch. xix. 9; Exod. xviii. 19)—**art thou cursed.** *The first curse pronounced against a human being.* Adam and Eve were not cursed, though the serpent and the devil were. If we may not conclude that Cain was thereby for ever excluded from the hope of salvation if he should repent, still less must we explain the Divine judgment down to a simple sentence of banishment from Eden. The fratricide was henceforth to bear the displeasure and indignation of his Maker, whose image in Abel he had slain; of which indignation and displeasure his expatriation was to be a symbol. Different explanations have been offered of the clause, **from the earth**, or *ground*, *Adhamah*, which, however, cannot mean *more than the ground*, which already had been cursed (ch. iii. 17; Lange), since "the curse of the soil and the misery of man cannot well be compared with each other" (Kalisch); or simply *away from the district*, the scene of his crime (Kalisch, Speaker's, Rosenmüller,

Tuch, Gerlach, Delitzsch), as if all that the sentence implied was banishment from Eden; but must involve in addition the idea that the curse was to leap upon him *from the earth*, or ground, in general (Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Knobel, Alford, Murphy). **Which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.** The terrible significance of this curse is further opened in the words which follow. The earth was to be against him — 1. *In refusing him its substance.* **When thou tillest** (literally, *shalt till*) **the ground, it shall not henceforth yield** (literally, *add to give*) **unto thee her strength.** Neither a double curse upon the entire earth for man's sake (Alford), nor a doom of sterility inflicted only on the district of Eden (Kalisch); but a judgment on Cain and his descendants with respect to their labours. Their tillage of the ground was not to prosper, which ultimately, Bonar thinks, drove the Cainites to city-building and mechanical invention. 2. *In denying him a home.* **A fugitive and a vagabond**—literally, *moving and wandering;* "groaning and trembling" (LXX., erroneously), "banished and homeless" (Keil)—**shalt thou be in the earth.** "As robbers are wont to be who have no quiet and secure resting-place" (Calvin); driven on by the agonising tortures of a remorseful and alarmed conscience, and not simply by "the earth denying to him the expected fruits of his labour" (Delitzsch). The ban of wandering, which David pronounced upon his enemies (Ps. lix. 12; cix. 10), in later years fell upon the Jews, who "for shedding the blood of Christ, the most innocent Lamb of God, are vagabonds to this day over the face of the earth" (Willet). Thus the earth was made the minister of God's curse, not a partaker of it, as some have strangely imagined, as if by drinking up the blood of Abel it had become a participant of Cain's crime (Delitzsch).

Vers. 13, 14.—**And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment** (or my sin) **is greater than I can bear.** Or, than can be borne away. Interpreted in either way, this is scarcely the language of confession, "sufficiens confessio, sed intempestiva" (Chrysostom); but, as the majority of interpreters are agreed, of desperation (Calvin). According to the first rendering Cain is understood as deploring not the enormity of his sin, but the severity of his punishment, under which he reels and staggers as one amazed (Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Calvin, Keil, Delitzsch, Murphy, Alford, Speaker's, Kalisch). According to the second, from the terrific nature of the blow which had descended on him Cain awakens to the conviction that his sin was too heinous to be forgiven (margin, Septuagint, Vulgate, Theodotion, Arabic, Syriac, Onkelos, Samaritan, Gesenius, Wordsworth). The first of these is favoured by the remaining portion of his address, which shows that that which had paralysed his guilty spirit was not the wickedness of his deed, but the overwhelming retribution which had leapt so unexpectedly from its bosom. The real cause of his despair was the sentence which had gone forth against him, and the articles of which he now recapitulates. **Behold, thou hast driven me this day**—"Out of the sentence of his own conscience Cain makes a clear, positive, Divine decree of banishment" (Lange)—**from the face of the earth.** Literally, *the ground,* i. e. the land of Eden. "Adam's sin brought expulsion from the inner circle, Cain's from the outer" (Bonar). **And from thy face shall I be hid.** Either (1) from the place where the Divine presence was specially manifested, *i. e.* at the gate of Eden, which does not contradict (Kalisch) the great Biblical truth of the Divine omnipresence (cf. Exod. xx. 24); or, (2) more generally, from the enjoyment of the Divine favour (cf. Deut. xxxi. 18). "To be hidden from the face of God is to be not regarded by God, or not protected by his guardian care" (Calvin). **And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond.** "A vagabond and a runagate" (Tyndale, Coverdale, 'Bishops' Bible'). *Vagus et profugus* (Vulgate); *vagus et infestus agitationibus* (Tremellius and Junius). **In the earth.** The contemplation of his miserable doom, acting on his guilty conscience, inspired him with a fearful apprehension, to which in closing he gives expression in the hearing of his Judge. **And it shall come to pass, that every one**—not beast (Josephus, Kimchi, Michaelis), but person—**that findeth me shall slay me.** "Amongst the ancient Romans a man cursed for any wickedness might be freely killed (Dionysius Halicarnass., l. 2). Amongst the Gauls the excommunicated were deprived of any benefit of law (Cæsar. 'de Bello Gallico,' l. 6; cf. also Sophocles, 'Œdip. Tyrannus')" (Ainsworth). The apprehension which Cain cherished has been explained as an oversight on the part of the narrator (Schumann and Tuch); as a mistake on the part of Cain, who had no reason to know that the world was not populated (T. Lewis); as referring to the blood avengers of the future who might arise from his father's family (Rosenmüller, Delitzsch); and also, and perhaps with as much probability, as indicating that already, in the 130 years that had gone, Adam's descendants were not limited to the two brothers and their wives (Havernick).

Ver. 15.—The condemned fratricide's apprehensions were allayed by a special act of grace. **And the Lord said unto him, Therefore** (the LXX., Symm., Theodotion,

Vulgate, Syriac, Dathius, translate Not so— *οὐχ οὕτως, nequaquam*, reading לֹא כֵן instead of לָכֵן) **whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.** *I. e. fully*, sevenfold vengeance—complete vengeance (cf. Levit. xxvi. 28). In the case of Cain's murderer there was to be no such mitigation of the penalty as in the case of Cain himself; on the contrary, he would be visited more severely than Cain, as being guilty not alone of homicide, but of transgressing the Divine commandment which said that Cain was to live (Willet). As to why this special privilege was granted to Cain, it was not because "the early death of the pious Abel was in reality no punishment, but the highest boon" (Kalisch), nor because banishment from God's presence was the greatest possible punishment, "having in itself the significance of a social human death" (Lange), nor because it was needful to spare life for the increase of posterity (Rosenmüller); but perhaps — 1. To show that "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." 2. To prove the riches of the Divine clemency to sinful men. 3. To serve as a warning against the crime of murder. To this probably there is a reference in the concluding clause. **And the Lord set a mark upon**—gave a sign to (LXX.)—**Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.** Commentators are divided as to whether this was a visible sign to repress avengers (the Rabbis, Luther, Calvin, Piscator, &c.), or an inward assurance to Cain himself that he should not be destroyed (Aben Ezra, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Tuch, Kalisch, Delitzsch). In support of the former it is urged that an external badge would be more likely to repel assailants; while in favour of the latter it is pleaded that of seventy-six times in which *ôth* occurs in the Old Testament, in seventy-five it is translated *sign*. If there was a visible mark upon the fugitive, it is impossible to say what it was; that it was a shaking (LXX.), or a continual fleeing from place to place (Lyra), or a horn in the head (Rabbis), a peculiar kind of dress (Clericus), are mere conceits. But, whatever it was, it was not a sign of Cain's forgiveness (Josephus), only a pledge of God's protection. Cf. the Divine prophetic sentence against the Jewish Cain (Ps. lix. 11).

Ver. 16.—**And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.** Not simply ended his interview and prepared to emigrate from the abode of his youth (Kalisch); but, more especially, withdrew from the neighbourhood of the cherubim (*vide* on ver. 14). **And dwelt in the land of Nod.** The geographical situation of Nod (Knobel, China?) cannot be determined further than that it was **on the east of Eden**, and its name, *Nod*, or wandering (cf. vers. 12, 14; Ps. lvi. 8), was clearly derived from Cain's fugitive and vagabond life (*vide* Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 1612; and cf. Fürst, 'Lex.,' *sub voce*), "which showeth, as Josephus well conjectureth, that Cain was not amended by his punishment, but waxed worse and worse, giving himself to rapine, robbery, oppression, deceit" (Willet).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—15.—*The first brothers.* I. THE BROTHERS AT HOME. 1. The *first* home. Of Divine appointment, and among the choicest blessings that have survived the fall, homes are designed for—(1) The increase of the human family. Of all animals, the offspring of man is least fitted to provide for itself in infancy. Without the shelter of a home man would be born only to die. (2) The happiness of the race. Considering man's weakness and wants, miseries and dangers, as a fallen being existing in a sin-cursed world, the family constitution, which secures the interdependence of individuals, largely enhances his comfort. Whether the same amount of happiness would have been attainable had the race been created, like the angelic, as a multitude of separate individuals may be difficult to determine. (3) The training of children. Being God's gift, they should be highly prized, tenderly cherished, carefully nurtured, intelligently counselled by the father, anxiously cared for by the mother, lovingly, perseveringly, prayerfully reared by both; educated not for themselves, or the world, or even for their parents, but for God; trained to *work*, as indolence is a sin, and to *worship*, as piety is a duty. 2. A *pious* home. Its *locality*, though outside the garden, was still in Eden, which was a mercy, and probably not far from the cherubim, Adam's gate of heaven, which was hopeful. When man founds a home it should never be far removed from God, heaven, or the Church. Its *structure*, mayhap, was humble,—another garden likely, but this time man-made, and not so fair as that which God had planted,—but its precincts were hallowed by the rites of religion. It is one mark of a pious home when God has an altar in it (Ps. cxviii. 15). Its *inmates* were fallen creatures, but

still pardoned sinners, who, having believed the Divine promise, had become partakers of the Divine mercy. There is no true piety where there is no humble faith in the gospel. 3. A *happy* home. At least it had all the elements that were needful to surround them with earthly felicity: the only true foundation on which a happy home can rest—religion (Ps. cxii. 1; Prov. xv. 25; xxiv. 3); the best blessing a home can receive—the Divine favour (Prov. iii. 33); the best ornaments a home can possess—children (Ps. cxxviii. 3).

II. THE BROTHERS AT WORK. These works were—1. *Necessary*. God's commands, man's powers and needs, the earth's condition, render toil indispensable. No one is born to sloth. Every one should have a calling. Those whom God's bounty relieves from the necessity of toiling for daily bread should still labour in some specific occupation for God's glory and man's good. 2. *Various*. The first instance of division of labour. Diversity of employments, rendered necessary by individual capacities and tastes, promotes excellence of workmanship, facility of production, and rapidity of distribution; contributes to the unity and stability of the social fabric by teaching the interdependence of its several parts; multiplies the comforts, stimulates the energies, and generally advances the civilisation of mankind. 3. *Useful*. Most trades and professions are useful; but some more so than others. Parents should select for their children, and young persons for themselves, occupations that contribute to the good of man rather than those which enhance their own profit. A calling that flourishes on the world's luxuries is less remunerative, besides being less honourable, than one which supplies men's necessities. 4. *Healthful*. These brothers both worked in the open air. Out-of-door employment more conducive to physical vigour and mental activity than toiling in mines, factories, warehouses, and shops. Men should study health in their secular pursuits.

III. THE BROTHERS AT WORSHIP. Born in the same home, educated by the same parents, trained to the same duty of devotion, the first brothers became worshippers of the same God, at the same time, and in the same place, at the same altar, and in the same way, viz., by the presentation of oblations, yet their service was essentially diverse. 1. Their *offerings*. These were not the same—(1) In *matter*. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground; Abel of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. The one was bloodless, the other bloody. Each one's offering was connected with, perhaps suggested by, his daily calling. So the trades, temperaments, abilities of men determine the kinds of their religious service and devotion. This diversity in men's oblations is natural, appropriate, beautiful, right. God requires the consecration to himself of the first-fruits of men's powers and callings (Prov. iii. 9). (2) In *measure*. Abel offered unto God a more excellent (literally, a greater) sacrifice than Cain (Heb. xi. 4). Cain brought *of the fruit*, not *fruits*, of the earth—offering with a penurious hand, as many of God's worshippers do still. Abel brought of the fattest and the best of his flocks; so should all God's worshippers reserve for him the first-fruits of their years, powers, labours, increase. (3) In *meaning*. The elder brother's offering was an acknowledgment of dependence upon God, an expression, probably (?), of gratitude to God, possibly also a recognition of God's claim to be worshipped; the younger son's declared consciousness of sin, faith in atoning blood, hope in Divine mercy. 2. Their *worship*. The state of the heart is the essential thing in worship. If the offering of the hand be the husk, the devotion of the soul is the kernel of true religion. Not only was Abel's offering better than Cain's; it was offered in a better way. (1) In faith, trusting in the promise, having an outlook towards the woman's seed (Heb. xi. 4). Without faith in the Lamb of God who died for sin no worship can be accepted. (2) In obedience. Abel's worship was offered in the way prescribed. God does not leave men to invent forms of religion. Christianity condemns will-worship (Col. ii. 18). The most costly offerings will not suffice for obedience to Divine prescription (1 Sam. xv. 22). (3) In sincerity. Cain was a formalist; Abel a worshipper of God in spirit and in truth. Only such can worship God (John iv. 24). Hypocrisy and formalism, though accompanied with splendid ritual, God rejects (Prov. xxi. 27; Isa. i. 13—15; Matt. vi. 5). 3. Their *receptions*. These were—(1) *Diametrically opposite*. Abel was accepted by God, received into Divine favour, regarded as righteous, considered as a justified person. Cain was not accepted; not because the fruits of the earth were in themselves

unworthy of God's acceptance, but because, in presenting them, he virtually proclaimed his disbelief in God's promise and repudiation of God's way of salvation. (2) *Visibly proclaimed.* By some outward sign God expressed in the one case his approbation, and in the other his displeasure. By the gospel he now solemnly declares his reception of the true and rejection of the false worshipper (John iii. 36). More reliable are the announcements which God now makes through his word than those which he then delivered through the medium of signs. (3) *Distinctly understood.* Neither Cain nor Abel was in any dubiety as to his position. The mind of God had been explicitly revealed. The one was assured that he was righteous; the other knew that he was reprobate. So may every one ascertain his standing in God's sight who listens to the inspired declarations of the Divine word (John iii. 18; Rom. iii. 20; iv. 5).

IV. The brothers at variance. Divided in daily toils, religious worship, Divine acceptance, they were now also divided in fraternal regards. This estrangement was—(1) *Unseemly* in its character, existing, as it did, between brothers. Where, if not within the hallowed circle of home, should mutual love prevail? Who, if not brothers, should preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace? (Ps. cxxxiii. 1). Brothers were meant for friendship and helpfulness, not for envy and destruction. Let us thank God there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother (Prov. xviii. 24). (2) *Unjustifiable* in its cause. It sprang from *religion*. Alas, that which was heralded as the bringer of peace on earth and good-will among men has often been the cause of strife and contention, separation and estrangement, as Christ foretold (Matt. x. 34—36). What a signal proof of the corruption of the human heart! It was occasioned through *envy*. Cain was wroth because his brother was accepted. Unbelievers often take offence at believers because of blessings they affect to despise. (3) *Wrathful* in its manifestation. Because his brother's person and service were approved Cain grew enraged; because himself and his offerings were refused he was angry with God. Hypocrites and sinners are always displeased with those who are better than themselves. (4) *Murderous* in its termination. Envy, wrath, murder—the beginning, middle, end of a wicked man's life. The last act lies enfolded in the second, and the second in the first, as the fruit in the tree, and the tree in the seed. Hence wrath is murder in the thought (1 John iii. 15); and "who is able to stand before envy?" (Prov. xxvii. 4). Therefore *obsta principiis.* Cultivate fraternal affection. Let brotherly love continue. Follow younger brothers in their piety rather than hate them for their prayers.

V. The brothers at the judgment bar. 1. Both *went* there. The spirit of the first martyr ascended to God, and God came to arraign the red-handed murderer. So must we all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. 2. Both were *judged* there. The righteous Abel's character and conduct were approved; for God espoused his cause, and heard the cry of his innocent blood. The guilty Cain was condemned. So will all before the great white throne be judged according to their works; of every one of which God is now a witness, as he was of the fratricidal act of Cain. 3. Both were *sentenced* there. Abel was received into glory, and his blood avenged; Cain banished from God's presence, transformed into a wandering fugitive, in mercy spared from immediate destruction, but in reality, with his scarred brow, doomed to a lifetime of woe—fit emblem of the doom of the ungodly; as the award of righteous Abel was of the honour of the righteous (Matt. xxv. 46).

Lessons:—1. Value the Divine gift of home. 2. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 3. Serve the Lord with gladness. Present your bodies a living sacrifice. Come into his courts, and bring an offering with you. 4. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. 5. Live in anticipation of, and preparation for, the judgment-day. 6. Learn that nothing will keep a man right in life and safe in death except faith in atoning blood. Cain had pious parents, a good home, an honourable calling, a religious profession, and yet was lost. Abel had a short life and a sad death, but he was safe. Faith in Christ (the woman's seed) made the difference.

Ver. 9.—*Am I my brother's keeper?* I. The *world* says, No! 1. Every man's brother ought to keep himself. 2. If a man's brother cannot keep himself, he

deserves to perish. 3. No man's brother will be at the trouble to keep him. 4. Every man has enough to do to keep himself. Such is *the gospel of selfishness* proclaimed and practised by the world.

II. *God* says, YES! 1. Because he is your brother. *Affection* should prompt you. 2. Because he may get lost without your kéeping. *Humanity* should incline you. 3. Because I expect you. *Religion* commands you. Such is *the gospel of love* which God preaches and charges us to practise.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—8.—*The kingdom of God.* Another "genesis" is now described, that of *sinful society*, which prepares the way for the description of the rising *kingdom of God.*

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL EVIL IS CONTEMPORANEOUS WITH HUMAN SOCIETY. We must still bear in mind that the aim of the narrative is not scientific, but religious and didactic. The sketch of the first family in vers. 1 and 2 is plainly an outline to be filled in. The keeper of sheep and the tiller of the ground are out in the broad world. We are not told that there were no other human beings when they were grown up. Probably from their employment it is meant to be inferred that the human family had already grown into something like a community, when there could be a division of labour. The production of animal and vegetable food in quantities can only be explained on the presupposition that man had increased on the earth. Then, in ver. 3, we are led on still further by "*the process of time.*"

II. THE COMMUNITY OF MEN, THUS EARLY, HAS SOME PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS WORSHIP. The two men, Cain and Abel, "*brought*" their offerings apparently to one place. The difference was not the mere difference of their occupations. Abel brought not only "the firstlings of the flock," but "*the fat thereof*," an evident allusion to the appointment of some sacrificial rites. The Lord's respect to Abel's offering was not merely a recognition of Abel's state of mind, though that is implied in the reference to the person, as distinct from the offering, but it was approval of Abel's *obedience* to the religious prescription which is in the background. The Lord remonstrates with Cain when his countenance fell and he was wroth. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (croucheth like a beast of prey ready to be upon thee). This may be taken either (1) retrospectively or (2) prospectively—sin as guilt, or sin as temptation; in either case it is *at the door*—not necessarily a welcome guest, but ready to take possession. Sin forgiven, temptation resisted, are placed in apposition to acceptance. "Unto thee shall be his desire,"—*i. e.* Abel's, as the younger,—"and thou shalt rule over him," *i. e.* the natural order shall be preserved. Notice—1. Divine love providing acceptance in the Divine order, in which religion is preserved, and natural life, with its appointments. 2. Divine mercy rescuing a fallen creature from the results of his own blind disobedience. 3. The righteousness of God maintained in the disorder and passion which spring out of human error and corruption. Sin is at the door; judgment close upon it. Yet God is justified though man is condemned. There is no great sin committed but it has been seen at the door first. 4. *Doing not well* precedes the direct *presumptuous sin.* "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." Cain was warned by God himself before his fallen countenance darkened his heart with crime and stained his hand with a brother's blood. What a picture of the *gradual degradation* of the conscience. Notice—(1) The disobedience of a Divine commandment in some minor point. (2) Sense of estrangement from God—loss of his "respect unto us." (3) Sullen, brooding enmity against God and man. (4) All these culminating in the violent outbreak of self-assertion, his own works evil, his brother's righteous, therefore he hated him. Ver. 8 is again an epitome. The talk of the two men with one another may represent a long period of angry debate. "*It came to pass*," on some occasion, in the field, the angry thoughts found their vent in angry words. "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." The first blood shed had a religious occasion for its origin. The protomartyr was slain as a testimony to the truth. Mark the significant omen for the subsequent human history. Marvel not if the world hate those to whom God shows

special respect. The type is here of all religious wars. The Cain spirit is not mere bloody-mindedness, but *all* defiance of God, and self-assertion, as against his will and word. *Infidelity* has been as bloody as *superstition*. Both meet in the same *perverted worship of self*.—R.

Ver. 9.—*Care for our brethren*. How terrible this question to the murderer! He thought, perhaps, his act was hidden, and strove to put it out of mind. Perhaps did not anticipate effect of his stroke; but now brought face to face with his sin. "Where is Abel?" He knew not. He knew where the body lay; but that was not Abel. Had sent him whence he could not call him back. "Where is thy brother?" is God's word to each of us. It expresses the great law that we are responsible for each other's welfare. "Am I my brother's keeper?" some would ask. Assuredly yes. God has knit men together so that all our life through we require each other's help; and we cannot avoid influencing each other. And has created a bond of brotherhood (cf. Acts xvii. 26), which follows from our calling him "Father." What doing for good of mankind? Not to do good is to do harm; not to save is to kill. Love of Christ works (Rom. x. 1; 2 Cor. v. 14).

I. We are called to care for those afar off. "Who is my neighbour?" We might answer, Who is not thy neighbour? Everywhere our brethren. Thousands passing away daily. Abel, a vapour, the character of human life (Ps. ciii. 15). Whither are they going? And we know the way of salvation. Light is given to no one for himself only (Matt. v. 13, 14). We are to hold it forth; to be as lights in the world (Phil. ii. 15). It is God's will thus to spread his kingdom. Are we answering the call? Test yourselves (cf. 1 John iii. 17). Deliver us from blood-guiltiness, O God. Thank God, the question speaks to us of living men. There are fields still to be reaped. The heathen, our brethren, claim a brother's help. How many varieties of Cain's answer:—You cannot reclaim savages; you just make them hypocrites; we must look at home first. And the lost masses at home are our brethren. Oh, it is in vain to help them; they will drink; they hate religion; they only think what they can get from those who visit them. Test these objections. Single out in thought one soul; compare his case with yours. You have instruction, ordinances, influences; and he the darkness of heathenism, or surroundings of vice. Yet Christ died for that soul. Can you let it depart without some effort, or even earnest prayer?

II. We are called to care for those around us. For their sake, watchfulness and self-restraint (cf. Rom. xiv. 15). We teach more by what we do than by what we say. The loving life teaches love; the selfish, ungodliness. Inconsistencies of Christians hinder Christ's cause. What art thou at home? Is thy life pointing heavenward? "None of us liveth to himself." "Where is thy brother?"—M.

Vers. 9—15.—*The condemnation and judgment of the first murderer*. Notice—

I. The Divine appeal to conscience, affording opportunity to repentance and confession, and therefore to the exercise of mercy.

II. The blinding effect of a great sin. The man who knew that God knew all persisting in a lie, and insulting the Divine majesty at the very throne of judgment, *i.e.* defying God by the monstrous extravagance of self-assertion, which is the effect of indulged sin, not only hardening the heart, but filling it with a mad desperation. So we find great criminals still, to the very last, adding sin to sin, as though they had come to think that the deeper they sunk into it the more chance they had of escaping its punishment, or by daring the whole extremity might the sooner know the worst.

III. There is great significance in the intimate connection set forth between the crime and punishment of Cain and the earth and the ground. The blood speaks from the ground, crying to God. Cain is cursed from the ground. The ground opened her mouth to receive the brother's blood. The ground refuses to serve the murderer. On the earth he shall be a fugitive and vagabond. From the face of the earth he is driven. His punishment is greater than he can bear. Surely all that is intended to place in vivid contrast the righteousness of God and the unrighteousness of man; the one witnessed by the *steadfast earth*, with its unbroken

laws, its pure, unfallen, peaceful state, with its communities of creatures innocent of all sin; the other witnessed by the cursed, wandering, suffering, hunger-pinched, miserable man, flying from his neighbour, flying from himself.

IV. As in the expulsion of man from Eden, so in the expulsion of Cain from society, there is MERCY MINGLED WITH JUDGMENT. The mark set upon Cain by the Lord was at once the mark of rejection and the mark of protection; it threatened sevenfold vengeance on the murderer of the murderer; it was an excommunication for the sake of the sinner as well as for the sake of the community. We must not expect to find in these primeval records more than a dim intimation of the Divine mind. But here, at the outset of the human race, there is the germ of that distinction and separation among mankind on the moral and spiritual ground which really is the essential fact of the kingdom of God. "The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel." Yet it is a good thing that God should say to us, in however fearful a manner, that that which is destructive of human society, which rises up against a brother's life, which hates and works out its hatred in cruel act, shall be, can be, separated from the world into which it has come, and cast out. We must look at the whole narrative from the side of the Abel element, not from the side of the Cain element; and the blessed truth contained in it is that God purges society of its evil men and evil principles, and makes its very martyrs' blood to be a consecration of the earth to proclaim his righteousness. We have not to answer the question, How about Cain? He is protected from violence. He is permitted to repent and return, though for a time an outcast. Out of the conflict of the two worlds will come forth the purpose of God—evil separated, good eternally triumphant.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 17.—Domiciled in Nod, whither, impelled by woman's love, his wife had accompanied him, the unhappy fugitive began to seek, if not to find, relief from the gnawing agonies of remorse in the endearments of conjugal felicity and the occupations of secular industry. **And Cain knew his wife.** Who must have been his sister, and married before the death of Abel, as "after that event it can scarcely be supposed that any woman would be willing to connect herself with such a miserable fratricide" (Bush). Though afterwards forbidden, the tendency of Divine legislation on the subject of marriage being always in the direction of enlarging rather than restricting the circle of prohibited relationships, the union of brothers and sisters at the first was clearly indispensable, if the race was to multiply outwards from a common stock. "Even in much later times, and among very civilised nations, such alliances were not considered incestuous. The Athenian law made it compulsory to marry the sister if she had not found a husband at a certain age. Abraham married his half-sister, Sarah; and the legislator Moses himself was the offspring of a matrimony which he later interdicted as unholy" (Kalisch). **And she conceived.** For even from the unbelieving and unthankful, the disobedient and the reprobate, God's providential mercies are not entirely withheld (Ps. cxlv. 9; Matt. v. 45). **And bare Enoch.** *Chanoch,* "dedicated," "initiated," from *chanach,* to instruct (Prov. xxii. 6) and to consecrate (Deut. xx. 5; 1 Kings viii. 63). Candlish detects in the name the impious pride of the first murderer; with more charity, Keil and Kalisch see a promise of the renovation of his life. The latter thinks that Cain called his son "Initiated" or "Instructed" to intimate that he intended to instruct him from his early years in the duties of virtue, and his city "Dedicated" to signify that he now recognised that "the firstling of his social prosperity belongs to God." If Luther's conjecture be correct, that the child received its name from its mother, it will touchingly express that young mother's hope that the child whom God had sent might be an augury of blessing for their saddened home, and her resolution both to consecrate him from his youth to God and to instruct him in God's fear and worship. **And he builded.** Literally, *was building,* i. e. began to build, "but never finished, leading still a runagate life, and so often constrained to leave the work, as the giants did who built the tower of Babel" (Willet). **A city.** Vater, Hartmann, and Bohlen discover in the city-building of Cain "a main proof of the mythical contents of the narrative," an advanced state of civilisation "utterly unsuitable to so early a period;" but ancient tradition (Phœnician, Egyptian, and Hellenic) is unanimous in ascribing to the first men the invention of agriculture and the arts, with the discovery of metals, the origin of music, &c. (*vide* Havernick's 'Intro.,' § 16).

Of course the עִיר which Cain erected was not a city according to modern ideas, but a keep or fort, enclosed with a wall for the defence of those who dwelt within (Murphy). It was the first step in the direction of civilisation, and Kalisch notes it as a deep trait in the Biblical account that the origin of cities is ascribed not to the nomad, but to the agriculturist. Impelled by the necessities of his occupation to have a fixed residence, he would likewise in course of time be constrained by the multiplication of his household to insure their protection and comfort. It is possible also that his attempt to found a city may have been dictated by a desire to bid defiance to the curse which doomed him to a wandering life; to create for his family and himself a new point of interest outside the holy circle of Eden, and to find an outlet for those energies and powers of which, as an early progenitor of the race, he must have been conscious, and in the restless activity of which oblivion for his misery could alone be found. If so, it explains the action which is next recorded of him, that **he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.** *I. e.* he consecrated it to the realisation of these his sinful hopes and schemes.

Ver. 18.—Years passed away, the family of Cain grew to manhood, and, in imitation of their parents, founded homes for themselves. **And unto Enoch** (whose wife probably would also be his sister, few caring at this early stage to intermarry with the accursed race) **was born Irad.** *Townsman*, citizen, *urbanus civilis* (Keil, Lange); fleet as a wild ass (Murphy); ornament of a city, from Ir, a city (Wordsworth). **And Irad begat Mehujael.** Smitten of God (Keil, Gesenius, Murphy), the purified or formed of God (Lange). **And Mehujael begat Methusael.** Man of God (Gesenius, Lange), man asked or man of El (Murphy), man of prayer (Keil). **And Methusael begat Lamech.** Strong youth (Gesenius, Lange); man of prayer, youth (Murphy); king, by metathesis for *melech* (Wordsworth). The resemblance between these names and those in the line of Seth has been accounted for by supposing a commingling of the two genealogies, or one common primitive legend in two forms (Ewald, Knobel). But—1. The similarity of the names does not necessarily imply the identity of the persons. Cf. *Korah* in the families of Levi (Exod. vi. 21) and Esau (ch. xxxvi. 5); *Hanoch* in those of Reuben (ch. xlvi. 9) and Midian (ch. xxv. 4); *Kenaz* in those of Esau (ch. xxxvi. 11) and Judah (Num. xxxii. 12). 2. The similarity of the names only proves that the two collateral branches of the same family did not keep entirely apart. 3. The paucity of names at that early period may have led to their repetition. 4. The names in the two lines are only similar, not identical (cf. with Irad, Jared, descent; with Mehujael, Mahalaleel, praise of God; with Methusael, Methuselah, man of the sword). 5. The particulars related of Enoch and Lamech in the line of Seth forbid their identification with those of the same name in the line of Cain.

Ver. 19.—**And Lamech took unto him two wives.** Being the first polygamist of whom mention is made, the first by whom "the ethical aspect of marriage, as ordained by God, was turned into the lust of the eye and lust of the flesh" (Keil). Though afterwards permitted because of the hardness of men's hearts, it was not so from the beginning. This was "a new evil, without even the pretext that the first wife had no children, which held its ground until Christianity restored the original law—Matt. xix. 4—6" (Inglis). The names of Lamech's wives were suggestive of sensual attractions. **The name of the one Adah**, the Adorned (Gesenius), **and the name of the other Zillah**, the shady or the tinkling (Keil), the musical player (Lange), the shadow (Wordsworth). "Did Lamech choose a wife to gratify the eye with loveliness? and was he soon sated with that which is so short-lived as beauty, and then chose another wife in addition to Adah? But a second wife is hardly a wife; she is only the shadow of a wife" (*ibid.*).

Ver. 20.—**And Adah bare Jabal.** Either the Traveller or the Producer, from *yabhal*, to flow; poetically, to go to walk; hiphil, to produce; descriptive, in the one case, of his nomadic life, in the other of his occupation or his wealth. **He was the father**—*av*, father; used of the founder of a family or nation (ch. x. 21), of the author or maker of anything, especially of the Creator (Job xxxviii. 28), of the master or teacher of any art or science (ch. iv. 21)—**of such as dwell in tents, and** of such as have **cattle.** *Mikneh*, literally, possession, from *kanah*, to acquire, as in ver. 1; hence cattle, as that was the primitive form of wealth (cf. *pecus*, *pecunia*); by which may be meant that Jabal was the first nomad who introduced the custom of living in tents, and pasturing and breeding not sheep merely, but larger quadrupeds as well, for the sake of wealth.

Ver. 21.—**And his brother's name was Jubal.** Player on an instrument, the musician. Cf. *jobel*, an onomatopoetic word signifying *jubilum*, a joyful sound. Cf. Greek, ὀλολύζειν, ἀλαλάζειν; Latin, *ululare;* Swedish, *iolen;* Dutch, *ioelen;* German, *juchen* (Gesenius). **He was the father of all such as handle the harp.** The *kinnor*, a stringed instrument, played on by the plectrum according to Josephus ('Ant.,' 7, 12, 3), but in David's time by the hand (1 Sam. xvi. 23; xviii. 10; xix. 9), corresponding to the modern lyre. Cf. κινύρα, κιννύρα, cithara; German,

knarren; so named either from its tremulous, stridulous sound (Gesenius), or from its bent, arched form (Fürst). **And the organ.** '*Ugabh*, from a root signifying to breathe or blow (Gesenius), or to make a lovely sound (Fürst); hence generally a wind instrument—*tibia, fistula, syrinx;* the shepherd's reed or bagpipe (Keil); the pipe or flute (Onkelos); the *organon*, i. e. an instrument composed of many pipes (Jerome). Kalisch discovers a fitness in the invention of musical instruments by the brother of a nomadic herdsman, as it is "in the happy leisure of this occupation that music is generally first exercised and appreciated." Murphy sees an indication of the easy circumstances of the line of Cain; Candlish, "an instance of the high cultivation which a people may often possess who are altogether irreligious and ungodly;" Bonar, a token of their deepening depravity—"it is to shut God out that these Cainites devise the harp and the organ."

Ver. 22.—**And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain.** Worker in brass or iron; related to Persian, *tûpal*, iron dross (Gesenius, Rödiger, Delitzsch). Keil and Fürst think this Persian root cannot be regarded as the proper explanation of the name. Fürst suggests that the tribe may have been originally named Tubal, and known as inventors of smith-work and agricultural implements, and that Cain may have been afterwards added to them to identify them as Cainites (*vide* 'Lex. sub nom.'). The name Tubal, like the previous names Jabal and Jubal, is connected with the root *yabal*, to flow, and probably was indicative of the general prosperity of the race. Their ancestor was specially distinguished as **an instructor** (literally, *a whetter*) **of every artificer** (instrument, LXX., Vulgate, Kalisch) **in brass** (more correctly copper) **and iron.** בַּרְזֶל, according to Gesenius a quadrilateral from the ch. בְּזַן, to transfix, with ל appended; according to Fürst out of בַּזֶל, from בָּזַל, to be hard, by resolving the dagesh into *r*. **And the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah**—the lovely. Considering the general significance of names, we shall scarcely go astray if with Kalisch we find in the name of the sister of Tubal-cain, "the beautiful," as compared with that of Adam's wife, "the living," a growing symptom of the degeneracy of the times. Beauty, rather than helpfulness, was now become the chief attraction in woman. Men selected wives for their lovely forms and faces rather than for their loving and pious hearts. The reason for the introduction of Naamah's name into the narrative commentators generally are at a loss to discover. Inglis with much ingenuity connects it with the tragedy which some see in the lines that follow.

Vers. 23, 24.—**And Lamech said unto his wives.** The words have an archaic simplicity which bespeak a high antiquity (*vide* Havernick's 'Introd.,' p. 105), naturally fall into that peculiar form of parallelism which is a well-known characteristic of Hebrew poetry, and on this account, as well as from the subject, have been aptly denominated *The Song of the Sword* (Ewald, p. 267).

Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
For I have slain a man to my wounding (for my wound),
And a young man to my hurt (because of my strife).
If (for) **Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,**
Truly (and) **Lamech seventy and sevenfold.**

Origen wrote two whole books of his commentary on Genesis on this song, and at last pronounced it inexplicable. The chief difficulty in its exegesis concerns the sense in which the words כִּי הָרַגְתִּי are to be taken. 1. If the verb be rendered as a preterite (LXX., Vulgate, Syriac, Kalisch, Murphy, Alford, Jamieson, Luther), then Lamech is represented as informing his wives that in self-defence he has slain a young man who wounded him (not two men, as some read), but that there is no reason to apprehend danger on that account; for if God had promised to avenge Cain sevenfold, should any one kill him, he, being not a wilful murderer, but at worst a culpable homicide, would be avenged seventy and sevenfold. 2. If the verb be regarded as a future (Aben Ezra, Calvin, Kiel, Speaker's. "The preterite stands for the future . . . (4) In protestations and assurances in which the mind of the speaker views the action as already accomplished, being as good as done"—Gesenius, 'Heb. Gram.,' § 126), then the father of Tubal-cain is depicted as exulting in the weapons which his son's genius had invented, and with boastful arrogance threatening death to the first man that should injure him, impiously asserting that by means of these same weapons he would exact upon his adversary a vengeance ten times greater than that which had been threatened against the murderer of Cain. Considering the character of the speaker and the spirit of the times, it is probable that this is the correct interpretation. 3. A third interpretation proposes to understand the words of Lamech hypothetically, as thus:—"If I should slay a man, then," &c. (Lange, Bush); but this does not materially differ from the first, only putting the case conditionally, which the first asserts categorically. 4. A fourth gives to כִּי the force of a question (*vide* Stanley Leathes, 'Heb. Gram.,' p. 202), and imagines Lamech to be assuring his wives, who are supposed to have been

apprehensive of some evil befalling their husband through the use of Tubal-cain's dangerous weapons, that there was no cause for their anxieties and alarms, as he had not slain a man, that he should be wounded, or a young man, that he should be hurt; but this interpretation, it may be fairly urged, is too strained to be even probably correct.

Vers. 25, 26.—The narrative now reverts to the fortunes of the doubly saddened pair. **And Adam knew his wife again.** Having mournfully abstained for a season *à thoro conjugali* (Calvin); not necessarily implying that Adam and Eve had not other children who had grown to man's estate prior to the death of Abel (cf. ch. v. 4). **And she bare a son, and called his name Seth.** *Sheth*, from *shîth*, to put or place; hence appointed, put, compensation. **For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed**—*semen singulare* (Calvin); *filium*, Eve having borne daughters previously (Onkelos, Jonathon, Dathe, Rosenmüller)—**instead of Abel.** Her other children probably had gone in the way of Cain, leaving none to carry on the holy line, till this son was born, whom in faith she expects to be another Abel in respect of piety, but, unlike him, the head of a godly family (Calvin). **Whom Cain slew.** Literally, *for Cain killed him* (Kalisch). The A. V. follows the LXX., *ὃν ἀπέκτεινε Καϊν*, and has the support of Gesenius, who renders כִּי = אֲשֶׁר (see 'Lex. sub nom.'); of Rosenmüller, who says, "Conjunctio enim causalis כִּי sæpius pro relativo pronomine usurpatur," quoting, though without much aptness, Ps. lxxi. 15 (*com. in loco*); and of Sal. Glass, who supplies several so-called examples of the relative force of כִּי, every one of which is perfectly intelligible by translating the particle as *quia* ('Sac. Phil.,' iii. 2, xv.); and of Stanley Leathes ('Heb. Gram.,' ch. xii. 16). There seems, however, no sufficient reason for departing from the ordinary casual signification of the particle. Fürst does not recognise the meaning which Gesenius attaches to כִּי (cf. Ewald's 'Heb. Syntax,' § 353). **And to Seth, to him also there was born a son.** Thus the expectations of Eve concerning her God-given son were not disappointed, but realised in the commencement and continuance of a godly line. The pious father of this succeeding child, however, had either begun to realise the feebleness and weakness of human life, or perhaps to be conscious of the sickly and infirm state in which religion then was. **And he called his** (son's) **name Enos.** *Enosh*, "man" (Gesenius); "mortal, decaying man" (Fürst); "man, sickly" (Murphy). **Then began men.** Literally, *it was begun*. *Huchal* third preterite *hophal* of *chalal* (Greek, *χαλάω, λύω*), to open a way. Hence "the literal sense of the word is, a way was now opened up, and an access afforded, to the worship of God, in the particular manner here described" (Wordsworth). **To call upon the name of the Lord.** Either (1) to invoke by prayer the name of Jehovah, *i. e.* Jehovah himself as he had been pleased to discover his attributes and character to men, referring to the formal institution of public worship. "The expression is elsewhere used to denote all the appropriate acts and exercises of the stated worship of God—ch. xii. 8; xiii. 4; xxi. 33; 1 Chron. xvi. 8; Ps. cv. 1" (Bush). Or (2) to call themselves by the name of Jehovah—cf. Num. xxxii. 42; Judges xviii. 29; Ps. xlix. 12; Isa. xliv. 5 (margin). Other renderings need only be mentioned to be set aside. (*a*) Then began men profanely to call upon the name of God (Onkelos, Jonathan, Josephus), referring to the institution of idolatry. (*b*) Then men became so profane as to cease to call (Chaldee Targum). (*c*) Then he hoped to call upon the name of the Lord; *οὗτος ἤλπισεν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ* (LXX). (*d*) Then the name Jehovah was for the first time invoked (Cajetan), which is disproved by ch. iv. 3.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 17—26.—*The progress of the race.* I. ITS INCREASE IN POPULATION. Starting from a single pair in Eden, in the course of seven generations the human family must have attained to very considerable dimensions. At the birth of Seth, Adam was 130 years old, and in all probability had other sons and daughters besides Cain and his wife. If Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, was contemporaneous with Enoch, the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth, at least 600 years had passed away since the race began to multiply; and "if Abraham's stock in lesse than 400 yeares amounted to 600,000, Cain's posterity in the like time might arise to the like multitude" (Willet). If to these the descendants of Seth be added, it will at once appear that the earth's population in the time of Lamech was considerably over 1,000,000 of inhabitants. Let it remind us of the reality and power of God's blessing (ch. i. 28).

II. ITS ADVANCEMENT IN INTELLIGENCE. "It is a curious fact that while all

modern writers admit the great antiquity of man, most of them maintain the very recent development of his intellect, and will hardly contemplate the possibility of men equal in mental capacity to ourselves having existed in prehistoric (?) times" (Wallace, Brit. Assoc. Address, 1876). For prehistoric write antediluvian, and the sentiment is exactly true. The circumstance that we have no remains of antediluvian civilisation is no sufficient evidence that such did not exist. Speaking of certain earthworks of great antiquity that have been discovered in the Mississippi valley,—camps, or works of defence, sacred enclosures, with their connected groups of circles, octagons, squares, ellipses, polished and ornamented pottery, &c.,—the same distinguished writer says. "The important thing for us is, that when North America was first settled by Europeans, the Indian tribes inhabiting it had no knowledge or tradition of any races preceding themselves of higher civilisation. Yet we find that such races existed; that they must have been populous, and have lived under some established government; while there are signs that they practised agriculture greatly, as indeed they must have done to have supported a population capable of executing such gigantic works in such vast profusion." The exhumation by Dr. Schliemann on the plains of Troy of three successive civilisations, of which two were not known to have previously existed, and the third (the Ilium of Homer) had been almost regarded by archæologists as fabulous, is conclusive demonstration that the absence of all traces of primeval civilisation is no more a proof that such civilisation did not exist, than is the absence of all traces of the third day's vegetation a proof that it did not exist. The passage under consideration unmistakably reveals that the human intellect in those early times was not asleep. Within the compass of ten verses we read of the building of cities, of the laying out of farms and the acquisition of property, of the beginning of the mechanical arts and the manufacture of metallic weapons, of the rise of music and the cultivation of poetry. It may strike one as peculiar that this great intellectual development is represented as taking place exclusively in the line of Cain. From this some have inferred that the Bible means to throw disparagement upon human industry, commercial and agricultural enterprise, and all kinds of mechanical and inventive genius, and even sanctions the idea that religion is incompatible with business talent, poetical genius, and intellectual greatness. There is, however, no reason to suppose that this advancement in intelligence was confined to the Cainitic branch of the Adamic race. The prophecy of Enoch (*vide* Expos.) and the incidental allusion to metallic weapons in the name of Methuselah (man of the dart) suggest that the Sethitic line kept pace with their ungodly contemporaries in the onward march of civilisation, though that was not their chief distinction. Let us learn—1. That there is no essential antagonism between intelligence and piety. 2. That in God's estimation righteousness is of much higher value than material prosperity. 3. That where, as in the Cainitic line, there is no true godliness there is apt to be too intense devotion to culture or business.

III. ITS DECLENSION IN WICKEDNESS. 1. We can trace it in their *names*. Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Lamech being suggestive of qualities, principles, characteristics such as are approved by the spirit of worldliness; and Adah and Zillah (*vide* Expos.) being indicative of sensual attractions. 2. Their *works* proclaim it. It would be wrong to say that cities are necessarily evil things. On the contrary, they are magnificent monuments of man's constructive genius, and immensely productive of man's comfort. A city too is a type of heaven's gathering of redeemed humanity. Still it cannot be doubted that the need for cities was a proof of sin, as the building of the first city was an act of sin. The acquisition of property, and the uprise of such ideas as the rights of property, are likewise indications of a state of life that is not purely innocent (cf. Acts iv. 32). And though certainly it cannot be sinful either to make or to handle a harp, or to cultivate poetry, yet when we put all these things together—beautiful wives, iron weapons, musical instruments, and warlike ballads, if not bacchanalian songs—it is not difficult to perceive a deepening of that devotion to the things of this life which invariably proclaims a departure from the life of God. 3. Their immoral *lives* attest it. A growing disregard for the marriage law is evinced by the polygamy of Lamech; in the manufacture and use of offensive weapons we see the rising of a turbulent and lawless spirit; and these

two things, licentiousness and lawlessness, always mark the downward progress of an age or people.

IV. ITS PROGRESS IN RELIGION; at least in a section of its population, the godly line of Seth, in whom the piety of Abel was revived. Yet the narrative would seem to indicate that even they were not entirely free from the prevailing wickedness of the times. In the third generation the pressure of the worldly spirit upon the company of the faithful was so great that they felt obliged, as it were, in self-defence, to buttress their piety by a double wall of protection; viz., *separation from their ungodly associates in the world* by the formation of a distinct religious community, and by *the institution of stated social worship* (ch. iv. 26). And without these declension in true religion is as certain as with them advancement is secure. They are the New Testament rules for the cultivation of piety (2 Cor. vi. 14—18; Ephes. iv. 11—13; Heb. x. 25).

Lessons:—1. The downward progress of sin. 2. The danger of intellect and civilisation when divorced from piety. 3. The only right use of earth and earthly things is to make all subservient to the life of grace. 4. The danger of conformity to the world. 5. The only safety for the people of God, and especially in these times of great intellectual activity and mechanical and scientific skill, is to make deep and wide the line of distinction between them and the world, and steadfastly to maintain the public as well as private ordinances of religion.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 16—24.—*The kingdom of God contrasted with the kingdom of this world.* Society without the Lord. The banished Cain and his descendants.

I. MULTIPLICATION apart from Divine order is no blessing.

II. CIVILISATION without religion is a chaos of conflicting forces, producing violence, bloodshed, working out its own ruin. Compare France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Arts of life may grow from a mere natural root. Music, mechanical skill, scientific discovery, and invention, in themselves contain no moral life. Luxury turns to corruption, and so to misery.

III. RELIGION IS THE BASIS OF SOCIAL PROSPERITY. It is the true defence against the "inhumanity of man." Lamech, with his artificial protection against violent revenge, suggests the true safety in the presence of the Lord and observance of his commandments.—R.

Ver. 25, 26.—*Revelation in history.* The reappearance of the redeeming purpose. The consecrated family of Adam. The Divinely blessed line of descent preserved leading onward to the fulfilment of the first promise. "*Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.*"

I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF REGULAR WORSHIP, possibly of distinct Church life. 1. The name of the Lord is the true centre of fellowship—including *revelation, redemption, promise.* 2. The pressure of outward calamity and danger, the multiplication of the unbelievers, the necessary separation from an evil world, motives to call upon God.

II. RENOVATION AND RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGIOUS LIFE WORKS OUT GOD'S BLESSING ON THE RACE. The separated seed bears the promise of the future. See the repetition of the message of grace in the names of the descendants of Seth, "*the appointed.*"

III. The worship which was maintained by men was ENCOURAGED AND DEVELOPED BY REVELATIONS and special communications from Jehovah. Probably there were prophets sent. Methuselah, taking up the ministry of Enoch, and himself delivering the message to Noah, the preacher of righteousness. It is the method of God throughout all the dispensations to meet men's call upon his name with gracious manifestations to them.

IV. THE PERIOD OF AWAKENED RELIGIOUS LIFE and of special messengers, culminating in the long testimony and warning of Noah, preceded the period of outpoured judgment. So it is universally. There is no manifestation of wrath which does not vindicate righteousness. He is long-suffering, and waits. He sends the spirit of life first. Then the angel of death.—R.

§ 3. THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM (CH. V. 1—VI. 8).

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER V.

The present section carries forward the inspired narrative another stage, in which the onward progress or development of the human race is traced, in the holy line of Seth, from the day of Adam's creation, through ten successive generations, till the point is reached when the first great experiment of attempting to save man by clemency rather than by punishment is brought to a termination, and Jehovah, whose mercy has been spurned and abused, determines to destroy the impenitent transgressors. First, in brief and somewhat monotonous outline, the lives of the ten patriarchs are sketched, scarcely more being recorded of them than simply that they were born, grew to manhood, married wives, begat children, and then died. In only two instances does the history diverge from this severely simple style of biographical narration, namely, in the cases of Enoch, who, as he eclipsed his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors in the elevation of his piety during life, was honoured above them in the mode of his departure from the earth; and of Noah, whose birth was welcomed by his parents as a happy omen in a time of social degeneracy and religious declension, but who lived to see the hopes of reform which his pious parents cherished disappointed, and the world for its wickedness overwhelmed by a flood. Then, after sketching the uneventful lives of the patriarchs in a few bold strokes, the sacred penman sets before us a vividly arresting and profoundly impressive picture of the wickedness of the human race on the eve of that appalling catastrophe, at once indicating the cause of the earth's degeneracy in morals, and representing that degeneracy as a sufficient justification for the threatened judgment. Throughout the genealogical register the name Elohim is employed to designate the Deity, the subject being the evolutions of the Adam who was created in the image of Elohim. In the paragraph depicting the growth of immorality among men, and recording the Divine resolution to destroy man, the name Jehovah is used, the reason being that in his sin and in his punishment man is viewed in his relations to the God of redemption and grace.

Vers. 1, 2.—**This is the book.** *Sepher*, a register, a complete writing of any kind, a book, whether consisting of a pair of leaves or of only a single leaf (Deut. xxiv. 1, 3; "a bill of divorcement;" LXX., βίβλος; cf. Matt. i. 1; Luke iii. 36, 38). The expression presupposes the invention of the art of writing. If, therefore, we may conjecture that the original compiler of this ancient document was Noah, than whom no one would be more likely or better qualified than he to preserve some memorial of the lost race of which he and his family were the sole survivors, it affords an additional corroboration of the intelligence and culture of the antediluvian men. It is too frequently taken for granted that the people who could build cities, invent musical instruments, and make songs were unacquainted with the art of writing; and though certainly we cannot affirm that the transmission of such a family register as is here recorded was beyond the capabilities of oral tradition, it is obvious that its preservation would be much more readily secured by some kind of documentary notation. **Of the generations**—*i. e.* evolutions (*tol'doth;* cf. ch. ii. 4)—**of Adam.** In the preceding section the *tol'doth* of the heavens and the earth were exhibited, and accordingly the narrative commenced with the creative labours of the third day. Here the historian designs to trace the fortunes of the holy seed, and finds the point of his departure **in the day that God** (Elohim) **created man** (Adam), *i. e.* the sixth of the creative days. More particularly he calls attention to the great truths which had been previously included in his teaching concerning man; viz., *the dignity of his nature*, implied in the fact that **in the likeness of Elohim made he him**; *his sexual distinction*—**male and female created he them**; *their Divine benediction*—**and blessed them** (cf. ch. i. 27, 28); at the same time adding a fourth circumstance, which in the first document was not narrated, that their Maker gave to them *a suitable and specific appellation*—**and called their name Adam** (*vide* ch. i. 26), **in the day when they were created.**

Vers. 3—5.—At the head of the Adamic race stands the first man, whose career is summarised in three short verses, which serve as a model for the subsequent biographies. **And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years.** *Shanah*, a repetition, a return of the sun's circuit, or of similar natural phenomena; from *shanah*, to fold together, to repeat; hence a year (Gesenius, Fürst). Cf. Latin, *annus;* Greek, *ἐνιαυτός*; Gothic, *iar, jar, jer;* German, *jahr;* English, *year*—all of which "seem to carry the same thought, viz., that which comes again" (T. Lewis). "*Shanah* never means month" (Kalisch). **And begat** *a son* **in his own likeness,**—*damuth* (cf. ch. i. 26)—**after his image**—*tselem* (cf. ch. i. 26); not the Divine image in which he was himself created (Kalisch, Knobel, Alford), but the image or likeness of his own fallen nature, *i. e.* the image of God modified and corrupted by sin (Keil, Murphy, Wordsworth). "A supernatural remedy does not prevent generation from participating in the corruption of sin. Therefore, according to the flesh Seth was born a sinner, though he was afterwards renewed by the Spirit of grace" (Calvin). The doctrine of inherited depravity or transmitted sin has been commonly held to favour the theory which accounts for the origin of the human soul *per traducem* (Tertullian, Luther, Delitzsch), in opposition to that which holds it to be due to the creative power of God (Jerome, Augustine, Calvin, Beza, Turretin). Kalisch thinks the statement "Adam begat Seth in his own image" decisive in favour of Traducianism, while Hodge affirms "it only asserts that Seth was like his father, and sheds no light on the mysterious process of generation" ('Syst. Theol.,' Part I. ch. iii. § 2). The truth is that Scripture seems to recognise both sides of this question. *Vide* Ps. li. 5 in favour of Traducianism, and Ps. cxxxix. 14—16; Jer. i. 5 in support of Creationism (cf. Martensen's 'Dogmatics,' § 74), though there is much force in the words of Augustine—"De re obscurissima disputatur, non adjuvantibus divinarum scripturarum certis clarisque documentis." **And called his name**—probably concurring in the name selected by Eve (ch. iv. 25)—**Seth.**—Appointed, placed, substituted; hence compensation (ch. iv. 25). **And the days of Adam after he had begotten**—literally, *his begetting*—**Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters.** "In that primitive time the births did not rapidly follow each other—a fact which had not a physical, but only an ethical ground" (Delitzsch). The comparatively mature age at which the parent begat the son (in most instances probably the firstborn) through whom the promise was transmitted seems to indicate that his having a posterity at all was conditioned by the ripeness of his faith. At the same time the lateness of paternity among these primeval men may have been partly due to a physical cause as well, "since in exact accordance with the increasing degeneracy and rankness of human life is there, in a literal sense, the increase of a numerous and wretched offspring" (Lange). **And all the days that Adam**—not the whole tribe (Gatterer. *vide* Bohlen; cf. Balgarnie, 'Expositor,' vol. viii.), "as in this case Enoch must have been taken to heaven with his whole family" (Kalisch); but the individual bearing that name—**lived were nine hundred and thirty years.** The remarkable longevity of the Macrobii has been explained—1. *On the supposition of its non-authenticity.* (1) As a purely mythical conception (Knobel, Bauer, Hartmann, Bohlen); which, however, may be safely rejected as an altogether inadequate hypothesis. (2) As due to an error in the traditional transmission of the genealogical registers, several names having fallen out, leaving their years to be reckoned to those that remained (Rosenmüller); but against this conjecture stands the orderly succession of father and son through ten generations. (3) As representing not the lifetimes of individuals, but dynastic epochs (*vide supra*); and (4) as signifying lesser spaces of time—*e.g.* three months (Hensler), or one month (Raske)—than solar years; but even Knobel admits that "no shorter year have the Hebrews ever had than the period of a year's time." 2. *On the basis of its historic credibility;* as attributable to—(1) The original immortality with which man was endowed, and which was now being frayed away by the inroads of sin (Kalisch). (2) The superior piety and intelligence of these early fathers of the race (Josephus, 'Antiq.,' I. iii. 9). (3) The influence of the fruit of the tree of life which, while in the garden, Adam ate (Whately, 'Ency. Brit.,' eighth ed., Art. Christianity). (4) The original vigour of their physical constitutions, and the greater excellence of the food on which they lived (Willet). But if the first and second opinions are correct, then the Cainites should have died earlier than the Sethites, which there is no reason to believe they did; while the third is a pure conjecture (*vide* ch. ii. 9), and the fourth may contain some degree of truth. We prefer to ascribe the longevity of these antediluvian men to a distinct exercise of grace on the part of God, who designed it to be (1) a proof of the Divine clemency in suspending the penalty of sin; (2) a symbol of that immortality which had been recovered for men by the promise of the woman's seed; and (3) a medium of transmission for the faith, for

the benefit of both the Church and the world. **And he died.** "The solemn toll of the patriarchal funeral bell" (Bonar). Its constant recurrence at the close of each biography proves the dominion of death from Adam onward, as an immutable law (Rom. v. 11; Baumgarten, Keil, Lange); "warns us that death was not denounced in vain against men" (Calvin); "is a standing demonstration of the effect of disobedience" (Murphy); "was intended to show what the condition of all mankind was after Adam's fall" (Willet). The expression is not appended to the genealogical list of the Fathers after the Flood, doubtless as being then sufficiently understood; and it is not said of the descendants of Cain that they died, "as if the inheritance of the sons of God were not here on earth, but in death, as the days of the deaths of martyrs are held in honour by the Church as their birthdays" (Wordsworth).

Vers. 6—20.—The lives of the succeeding patriarchs are framed upon the model of this Adamic biography, and do not call for separate notice. The names of the next six were **Seth** (ver. 6; *vide* ch. iv. 25); **Enos** (ver. 9; *vide* ch. iv. 26); **Cainan**, possession (Gesenius); a child, one begotten (Fürst); a created thing, a creature, a young man (Ewald); possessor, or spearsman (Murphy; ver. 12); **Mahalaleel**, praise of God (Gesenius, Fürst, Murphy; ver. 15); **Jared**, descent (Gesenius); low ground, water, or marching down (Fürst); going down (Murphy; ver. 18); **Enoch**, dedicated, initiated (ver. 19; cf. ch. iv. 17)

Ver. 21.—The dedicated and initiated child grew up, like an Old Testament Timothy let us hope, to possess, illustrate, and proclaim the piety which was the distinguishing characteristic of the holy line. At the comparatively early age of sixty-five he **begat** ("forbidding to marry" being unknown then) **Methuselah.** Man of a dart (Gesenius), man of military arms (Fürst), man of the missile (Murphy), man of the sending forth—sc. of water (Wordsworth), man of growth (Delitzsch). **And Enoch walked with God** (Elohim). The phrase, used also of Noah, (ch. vi. 9), and by Micah (ch. vi. 8. Cf. the similar expressions, "to walk before God," ch. xvii. 1; Ps. cxvi. 9, and "to walk after God," Deut. xiii. 4; Ephes. v. 1), portrays a life of singularly elevated piety; not merely a constant realisation of the Divine presence, or even a perpetual effort at holy obedience, but also "a maintenance of the most confidential intercourse with the personal God" (Keil). It implies a situation of nearness to God, if not in place at least in spirit; a character of likeness to God (Amos iii. 3), and a life of converse with God. Following the LXX. (εὐηρέστησε δὲ Ἐνὼχ τῷ Θεῷ), the writer to the Hebrews describes it as a life that was "pleasing to God," as springing from the root of faith (Heb. xi. 5). Yet though pre-eminently spiritual and contemplative, Jude tells us (vers. 14, 15) the patriarch's life had its active and aggressive outlook towards the evil times in which he lived. **After he begat Methuselah.** "Which intimates that he did not begin to be eminent for piety till about that time; at first he walked as other men" (Henry). Procopius Gazeus goes beyond this, and thinks that before his son's birth Enoch was "a wicked liver," but then repented. The historian's language, however, does not necessarily imply that his piety was so late in commencing, and it is more pleasing to think that from his youth upwards he was "as a shining star for virtue and holiness" (Willet). **Three hundred years.** As his piety began early, so likewise did it continue long; it was not intermittent and fluctuating, but steadfast and persevering (cf. Job xvii. 9; Prov. iv. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 58). **And begat sons and daughters.** "Hence it is undeniably evident that the state and use of matrimony doth very well agree with the severest course of holiness, and with the office of a prophet or preacher" (Poole). **And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.** "A year of years" (Henry); "the same period as that of the revolution of the earth round the sun. After he had finished his course, revolving round him who is the true light, which is God, in the orbit of duty, he was approved by God, and taken to him" (Wordsworth). Modern critics have discovered in the age of Enoch traces of a mythical origin. They conclude the entire list of names to be not older than the time of the Babylonian Nabonassar, and believe it to be not improbable that "the Babylonians regulated the calendar with the assistance of an Indian astrologer or *ganaka* (arithmetician) of the town of *Chanoge*" (Von Bohlen). But "it would be strange indeed if just in the life of Enoch, which represents the purest and sublimest unity with God, a heathen and astrological element were intentionally introduced;" and, besides, "it is almost generally admitted that our list contains no astronomical numbers; that the years which it specifies refer to the lives of individuals, not to periods of the world; and that none of all these figures is in any way reducible to a chronological system" (Kalisch). **And Enoch walked with God.** "*Non otiosa ταυτολογία*," but an emphatic repetition, indicative of the ground of what follows. **And he was not.** Literally, *and not he* (cf. ch. xlii. 36; Jer. xxxi. 15; *καὶ οὐχ εὑρίσκετο*, LXX.). "Not absolutely he was not, but relatively he was not extant in the sphere of sense." "Non amplius inter mortales apparuit" (Rosenmüller). "If this phrase does not denote annihilation, much less does the

phrase 'and he died.' The one denotes absence from the world of sense, and the other indicates the ordinary way in which the soul departs from this world" (Murphy). **For God** (Elohim) **took him.** Cf. 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 9, 10, where the same word לָקַח is used of Elijah's translation; ὅτι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός, LXX.). Though the writer to the Hebrews (ch. xi. 5) adopts the paraphrase of the LXX., yet his language must be accepted as conveying the exact sense of the words of Moses. Analysed, it teaches (1) that the patriarch Enoch did not see death, as did all the other worthies in the catalogue; and (2) that in some mysterious way "he was taken up from this temporal life and transfigured into life eternal, as those of the faithful will be who shall be alive at the coming of Christ to judgment" (Keil). The case of Elijah, who was also taken up, and who afterwards appeared in glory on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. xvii.; Mark ix.; Luke ix.), appears to determine the locality into which Enoch was translated (which Kalisch willingly leaves to antiquaries to decide) to be neither the terrestrial Eden (certain Popish writers) nor the heavenly paradise where the pious dead are now assembled—*sheol* (Delitzsch and Lange), but the realm of celestial glory (Keil). That the departure of the good man was witnessed by his contemporaries we may infer from what occurred in the case of Elijah; and, indeed, unless it had been so it is difficult to see how it could have served the end for which apparently it was designed, which was not solely to reward Enoch's piety, but to demonstrate the certainty and to stimulate the hope of immortality. That the memory of an event so remarkable should have survived not merely in Jewish (Ecclus. xliv. 16) and Christian tradition (Jude 15), but also in heathen fable, is nothing marvellous. The Book of Enoch, compiled probably by a Jew in the days of Herod the Great, describes the patriarch as exhorting his son Methuselah and all his contemporaries to reform their evil ways; as penetrating with his prophetic eye into the remote future, and exploring all mysteries in earth and heaven; as passing a retired life after the birth of his eldest son in intercourse with the angels and in meditation on Divine matters; and as at length being translated to heaven in order to reappear in the time of the Messiah, leaving behind him a number of writings on religion and morality. "The Book of Jubilees relates that he was carried into paradise, where he writes down the judgment of all men, their wickedness and eternal punishment" (Kalisch). Arabic legend declares him to have been the inventor of writing and arithmetic. The Phrygian sage Annacus (Ἀνακος: "nomen detortum ab Chanoch") is said by Stephanus Byzantinus, and Suidas, who corrupts the name into Nannacus, to have lived before the flood of Deucalion, to have attained an age of more than 300 years, to have foreseen the flood, gathered all the people into a temple and made supplication to God, and finally to have been translated into heaven. "Classical writers also mention such translations into heaven; they assign this distinction among others to Hercules, to Ganymede, and to Romulus (liv. i. 16: "nec deinde in terris fuit"). But it was awarded to them either for their valour or their physical beauty, and not, as the translation of Enoch, for "a pious and religious life." Nor is "the idea of a translation to heaven limited to the old world; it was familiar to the tribes of Central America; the chronicles of Guatemala record four progenitors of mankind who were suddenly raised to heaven; and the documents add that those first men came to Guatemala from the other side of the sea, from the East" (cf. Rosenmüller and Kalisch, *in loco*).

Vers. 25—32.—The shortest life was followed by the longest, Methuselah begetting, at the advanced age of 187, **Lamech**,—strong or young man (Gesenius); overthrower, wild man (Fürst); man of prayer (Murphy),—continuing after his son's birth 782 years, and at last succumbing to the stroke of death in the 969th year of his age, the year of the Flood. Lamech, by whom the line was carried forward, was similarly far advanced when he begat a son, at the age of 182, and called his name **Noah**,—"rest," from *nuach*, to rest (cf. ch. viii. 4),—not "The Sailor," from the Latin *no*, and the Greek ναῦς (Bohlen), but at the same time explaining it by saying, **This same shall comfort**—*nacham*, to pant, groan, Piel to comfort. "*Nuach* and *nacham* are stems not immediately connected, but they both point back to a common root, *nch*, signifying to sigh, breathe, rest, lie down" (Murphy)—**us concerning our work and toil of our hands.** To say that Lamech anticipated nothing more than that the youthful Noah would assist him in the cultivation of the soil (Murphy) is to put too little into, and to allege that "this prophecy his father uttered of him, as he that should be a figure of Christ in his building of the ark, and offering of sacrifice, whereby God smelled a sweet savour of rest, and said he would not curse the ground any more for man's sake, ch. viii. 21" (Ainsworth), is to extract too much from his language. Possibly he had nothing but a dim, vague expectation of some good thing—the destruction of sinners in the Flood (Chrysostom), the use of the plough (R. Solomon), the grant of animal food (Kalisch), the invention of the arts and implements of husbandry (Sherlock, Bush)—that God was about to

bestow upon his weary heritage; or at most a hope that the promise would be fulfilled in his son's day (Bonar), if not in his son himself (Calovius). The fulfilment of that promise he connects with a recall of the penal curse which Jehovah had pronounced upon the soil. **Because of the ground which the Lord**—*Jehovah*, by whom the curse had been pronounced (ch. iii. 17)— **hath cursed.** The clause is not a Jehovistic interpolation (Bleek, Davidson, Colenso), but a proof "that the Elohistic theory is unfounded" ('Speaker's Commentary').

Ver. 32.—**And Noah was five hundred years old.** Literally, a son of 500 years, *i. e.* going in his 500th year (cf. ch. vii. 6; xvii. 1). The "son of a year" (Exod. xii. 5) means "strictly within the first year of the life" (Ainsworth). **And Noah begat**—*i. e.* began to beget (cf. ch. xi. 26)—**Shem,** —name (Gesenius), fame (Fürst)—**Ham,** —*cham;* hot (Gesenius, Murphy), dark-coloured (Fürst)—**and Japheth**—spreading (Gesenius, Murphy); beautiful, denoting the white-coloured race (Fürst). That the sons are mentioned in the order of their ages (Knobel, Kalisch, Keil, Colenso) may seem to be deducible (1) from the fact that they usually stand in this order (cf. ch. vi. 10; vii. 13; ix. 18; x. 1; 1 Chron. i. 4); (2) from the circumstance that it is commonly the eldest son's birth which is stated in the preceding list, though this is open to doubt; (3) from ch. x. 21, which, according to Calvin, Knobel, Keil, and others, describes Shem as Japheth's elder brother; and ch. ix. 24, which, according to Keil, affirms Ham to be the younger son of Noah; (4) from ch. x. 2—31, in which the order is reversed, but not otherwise altered. But there is reason to believe that Japheth was the eldest and Ham the youngest of the patriarch's children (Michaelis, Clarke, Murphy, Wordsworth, Quarry). According to ch. xi. 10 Shem was born 97 years before the Flood, while (ch. vi. 11) Noah was 600 years old at the time of the Flood. Hence, if Noah began to beget children in his 500th year, and Shem was born in Noah's 503rd year, the probability is that the firstborn son was Japheth. In accordance with this ch. x. 21 is understood by LXX., Vulgate, Michaelis, Lange, Quarry, and others to assert the priority in respect of age of Japheth. In the narrative Shem is placed first as being spiritually, though not physically, the firstborn. Ranke perceives in the mention of the three sons an indication that each was subsequently "to lay the foundation of a new beginning."

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.—The chronology of the present chapter represents man as having been in existence at the time of the Deluge exactly 1656 years. According to the Septuagint, which Josephus follows except in one particular (the age of Lamech), and which proceeds, again with two exceptions (the age of Jared, which it leaves untouched, and that of Lamech, which it increases by six), upon the principle of adding 100 to the Hebrew numbers, the age of man at the date of that catastrophe was 2262 (*vide*

	Hebrew.		Samaritan.		Septuagint.		Josephus.	
	Age at son's birth.	Age at death.	Age at son's birth.	Age at death.	Age at son's birth.	Age at death.	Age at son's birth.	Age at death.
Adam	130	930	130	930	230	930	230	930
Seth	105	912	105	912	205	912	205	912
Enos	90	905	90	905	190	905	190	905
Cainan	70	910	70	910	170	910	170	910
Mahalaleel	65	895	65	895	165	895	165	895
Jared	162	962	62	847	162	962	162	962
Enoch	65	365	65	365	165	365	165	365
Methuselah	187	969	67	720	187	969	187	969
Lamech	182	777	53	653	188	753	182	777
Noah	500	950	500	950	500	950	500	950
Shem	100		100		100		100	
Deluge	1656		1307		2262		2256	

Chronological Table). The dates of the Samaritan Pentateuch, being manifestly incorrect, need not be considered. Adding to the above dates the subsequent chronological periods from the Deluge to the call of Abram (Hebrew, 367; LXX., 1017), from the call of Abram to the exodus from Egypt (430 years according to one calculation, LXX.; 730 according to another, Kalisch), from the exodus to the birth of Christ (1648, Hales; 1593, Jackson; 1491, Ussher; 1531, Petavius; 1320, Bunsen), the antiquity of

man, according to the Biblical account, is not less than 5652 and not more than 7536 years. The conclusion thus reached, however, is somewhat scornfully repudiated by modern science, as affording, on either alternative, an altogether inadequate term of existence for the human race. 1. The evidence of geology is supposed irrefragably to attest that man must have been upon the earth at least 1000 centuries, and probably ten times as long (Wallace on 'Natural Selection,' p. 303). The data for this deduction, as stated by Sir Charles Lyell, are chiefly the discovery, in recent and post-pliocene formations of alleged great antiquity, of fossil human remains and flint implements along with bones of the mammoth and other animals long since extinct ('Antiquity of Man,' chs. i.—xix.). But (1) "So far as research has been prosecuted in the different quarters of the globe, no remains of man or of his works have been discovered till we come to the lake-silts, the peat-mosses, the river-gravels, and the cave-earths of the post-tertiary period," which seems at least an indirect confirmation of the Biblical record. (2) "The tree canoes, stone hatchets, flint implements, and occasional fragments of the human skeleton," upon which so much is based, "have been chiefly discovered within the limited area of Southern and Western Europe," while "we have scarcely any information from the corresponding deposits of other regions;" consequently, "till these other regions shall have been examined—and especially Asia, where man flourished long prior to his civilisation in Europe—it were premature to hazard any opinion as to man's first appearance on the globe." (3) "It is true that the antiquity of some of the containing deposits, especially the river drifts, is open to question, and it is also quite possible that the remains of the extinct quadrupeds may in some instances have been reassorted from older accumulations." (4) "Historically we have no means of arriving at the age of these deposits; geologically we can only approximate the time by comparison with existing operations; while palæontologically—the differences between these extinct pachyderms and those still existing are not greater than that which appears between the several living species, and would therefore indicate no great palæontological antiquity—nothing that may not have taken place within a few thousand years of the ordinarily received chronology" (Page on 'The Philosophy of Geology,' ch. xii. pp. 114—117). With these undesigned replies from a late eminent authority in geological science, the Bible student will do well to pause before displacing the currently-received age of man by the fabulous duration claimed for him by the first-named writers.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—32.—*The antediluvian saints.* I. DESCENDANTS OF ADAM. As such they were—1. A *sinful* race. Adam's son Seth was begotten in his father's image. Though still retaining the Divine image (1 Cor. xi. 7) as to nature, in respect of purity man has lost it. Inexplicable as the mystery is of inherited corruption, it is still a fact that the moral deterioration of the head of the human family has transmitted itself to all the members. The doctrine of human depravity, however unpleasant and humbling to carnal pride, is asserted in Scripture (Gen. vi. 5, 12; viii. 21; Job xv. 14; xxv. 4; Ps. xiv. 2, 3; li. 5; Isa. liii. 6; Rom. iii. 23), implied in the universal prevalence of sin and death (Rom. v. 12—21), assumed in the doctrines of regeneration, which is declared to be necessary absolutely and universally (John iii. 3), and redemption, of which one part of the design was to deliver men from the power as well as guilt of sin (Ephes. v. 25—27; Titus ii. 14; Heb. ix. 12—14; xiii. 12), and abundantly confirmed by experience, which testifies that "the wicked are estranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. lviii. 3). 2. A *long-lived* race. Whether their remarkable longevity was due to the original vigour of the *primus homo*, or to the influence of the tree of life, or to the eminency of the Sethites' piety, it was—(1) A great privilege, affording to themselves ample opportunity for self-cultivation and family training; to the world enlarged facilities for advancement in intelligence and civilisation; and to the Church the means of transmitting truth from age to age, and of drawing more closely together the bonds of religious communion. (2) An unexpected privilege. Upon the mind and heart of

Adam in particular it must have come with much surprise to find that life, which had been forfeited by sin, prolonged to well-nigh a millennium of years; and this impression, though perhaps it might become less as patriarch succeeded patriarch, would not, we think, entirely disappear. And so let us hope they came to recognise it as (3) a gracious privilege, due not to any secondary cause whatsoever, but primarily and solely to the infinite mercy of God, who had given them the promise of a woman's seed to sustain their faith and hope. And as such also (4) a suggestive privilege, emblematic of the immortality they had lost by sin, but received again through grace. 3. A *dying* race. Though a sinful, they were yet a pardoned race; but though a pardoned, they were yet a mortal race. A portion of the original penalty remains to remind man of his past history and present condition; and so although the Sethites "lived many hundred yeares, yet none of them filled up a thousand, lest they should have too much flattered themselves in long life; and seeing a thousand is a number of perfection, God would have none of them to attain to a thousand, that we might know that nothing is perfect here" (Willet).

II. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. Great as was the former distinction, it is completely eclipsed by this. It is a great thing to be born, but a greater to be born again. To be in God's world is much, to be in God's Church is more. To be of the line of Adam by nature is questionable honour, to be of Adam's line by grace is unquestionable glory. These ten names from Adam to Noah represent the leaders of the Church of God in the primeval age of the world. Whether distinguished by rare talent, great wealth, or high position, whether they invented arts, built cities, and composed hymns like the Cainites, is not said. Their chief distinction lay in—1. *Their possession of faith in God.* Not perhaps all with the same tenacity, but all with the same reality, they clung to the promise of the woman's seed. This it was which made them members of the antediluvian Church. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6). 2. *Their observance of religious worship.* From the beginning of the world the practice of sacrificial worship was maintained by believers. For two generations it appears to have been private rather than public in its character. In the days of Enos, according to one of the interpretations of ch. iv. 26, the Sethites began to worship God in social assemblies, as a means at once of fostering their own piety and of defending themselves against the rising tide of ungodliness; and we cannot doubt the godly practice would continue till the number of believers became so small that Noah could discover no one of like heart and spirit with himself to participate in his devotions. 3. *Their nonconformity to the world.* According to another reading of ch. iv. 26, in the third generation the holy seed began to make clearer and more distinct the lines of demarcation between themselves and the Cainites by calling themselves by the name of Jehovah, *i. e.* by adopting to themselves the appellation of the worshippers of the Lord. The fact that "the sons of God" are mentioned in ch. vi. 1 lends a sanction to this view. If it was so, doubtless the assumption of this particular title was only a sign or symptom of a great religious movement that began to effect the age,—a movement of separation in heart and life from the unbelievers of the time,—and that with a greater or lesser intensity perpetuated itself through each successive generation, not even dying away when there was only one man to be affected by it. 4. *Their witness-bearing against the wickedness of the ungodly world.* This comes out not indeed here, but in other Scriptures, in connection with two patriarchs, Enoch and Noah; the first of whom prophesied of the coming of the Lord (Jude 14), and the second of whom was a preacher of righteousness to the men of his generation (2 Pet. ii. 5); and what was true of them was doubtless characteristic in a measure of them all. They were unquestionably prophets, priests, and kings in their families and in relation to their contemporaries. 5. *Their eminently godly lives.* As much as this is implied in what has been already said. But of two of them it is distinctly stated that they walked with God:—of Enoch, that before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God; and of Noah, that he was a perfect man and an upright; and though not perhaps entitled to say that all of them lived at the same spiritual elevation as did those two fathers, yet we are fairly warranted to conclude that all of them maintained a holy walk and conversation in a rapidly degenerating age.

III. PROGENITORS OF THE PROMISED SEED. This was the chief distinction of these saintly men, and the real reason why their names and ages have been so carefully preserved to the Church of God. They were all links in the chain leading on to the woman's seed. So to speak, they were the ten first heralds sent out to proclaim the approach of the king; the ten first shadows or adumbrations of the great Prophet, Priest, and King to whom the faith of the Church was looking forward. True, it is not much that we know about them beyond their names, and certainly there is considerable vagueness and uncertainty about their import; but still, accepting those meanings which have the greatest probability in their favour, it is interesting to note how they all indicate points of character or features of history which met in Christ. Adam we know was a prophecy of Christ, the second Adam, in more than his name (1 Cor. xv. 45). Abel, the first martyr, prefigured him in dying by a brother's hand. Seth, the Substituted One, was a shadow of him who took our room and stead (Rom. v. 8); Enos, the Frail One, of him who, as to his human nature, was as "a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. liii. 2); Cainan, Possession, of him who was the gift of God (2 Cor. ix. 15). Mahalaleel, Praise of God, of him who "was not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. ii. 11, 12); Jared, Descent, of him who came down from heaven (John vi. 38); Enoch, the dedicated and instructed child who walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death, of him who for his people "sanctified himself" (John xvii. 19), "in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3), who with regard to his Father could say, "I do always those things that please him" (John viii. 29), and who, after accomplishing his Divine mission on the earth, was received up into glory (Acts i. 11); Methuselah, Man of the Dart, of him of whom the royal psalmist sang, "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies" (Ps. xlv. 5); Lamech, Strong Youth, of the strong One whom David saw in vision raised up for Israel's help (Ps. lxxxix. 19); Noah, Rest, of him in whose sacrifice God smelled a sweet savour of rest (Ephes. v. 2).

Lessons:—1. As descendants of Adam, let us remember we are sinners, and, repenting, believe the gospel; let us measure our days, and, observing their shortness, apply our hearts unto wisdom; let us think of our mortality, and prepare for the narrow house appointed for all the living. 2. As members of the Church of Christ, have we the marks that distinguished these antediluvian saints? 3. As the spiritual posterity of Jesus Christ, do we reflect him as his progenitors foreshadowed him?

Vers. 22—24.—*Enoch*. I. The CHARACTER of his piety. 1. Walking with God. 2. Witnessing for God.

II. The EXCELLENCE of his piety. 1. It began in early boyhood. 2. It flourished in evil times. 3. It grew in spite of scanty privileges. 4. It continued to the close of life.

III. The REWARD of Enoch's piety. He was translated that he should not see death. 1. A visible proof of immortality. 2. A solemn confirmation of the gospel. 3. A striking prophecy of Christ's ascension.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 24.—*Walking with God*. Whole chapter a reproof of the restless ambitions of men. Of these long lives the only record is a name, and the fact, "he died." Moral of the whole, "Dust thou art" (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 50). Yet a link between life here and life above. Enoch translated (Heb. xi. 5). The living man passed into the presence of God. How, we need not care to know. But we know why. He "walked with God." Who would not covet this? Yet it may be ours. What then was that life? Of its outward form we know nothing. But same expression (ch. vi. 9) tells us that Noah's was such. Also Abraham's, "the friend of God" (ch. xvii. 1); and St. Paul's (Phil. i. 21); and St. John (1 John i. 3) claims "fellowship with the Father" not for himself only (cf. John xiv. 23).

I. ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF A WALK WITH GOD. Not a life of austerity or of contemplation, removed from interests or cares of world. Noah's was not; nor Abra-

ham's. Nor a life without fault. Elijah was "of like passions as we are;" and David; and St. John declares, 1 John i. 8—10. 1. It is a life of faith, *i. e.* a life in which the word of God is a real power. Mark in Heb. xi. how faith worked in different circumstances. To walk with God is to trust him as a child trusts; from belief of his fatherhood, and that he is true. With texts before us such as John iii. 16; 1 John i. 9; ii. 2, why are any not rejoicing? Or with such as John iv. 10; Luke xi. 13, why are any not asking and receiving to the full? God puts no hindrance (Rev. iii. 20). But (1) too often men do not care. To walk with God is of less importance than to be admired of men. (2) If they do care, they often will not take God's way. The simple message (2 Cor. v. 20; 1 John v. 11) seems too simple. They look for feelings, instead of setting God's message before them and grasping it. 2. To walk with God implies desire and effort for the good of men. In an ungodly world Enoch proclaimed the coming judgment (Jude 14; cf. Acts xxiv. 25). Spiritual selfishness often a snare to those who have escaped the snare of the world. It is not the mind of Christ. It springs from weakness of faith Knowing the gift so dearly purchased, so freely offered to all, our calling is to persuade men. Not necessarily as teachers (James i. 19), but by intercession and by loving influence.

III. ENOCH WAS TRANSLATED. But apostles and saints died. Yet think not that their walk with God was less blessed. Hear our Lord's words (John xi. 26), and St. Paul (2 Tim. i. 10). Hear the apostle's desire (Phil. i. 23). Enoch walked with God on earth, and the communion was carried on above. Is not this our Saviour's promise? (John xiv. 21—23; xvii. 24). Death is not the putting off that which is corruptible; it is separation from the Lord. Assured that we are his for ever, we may say, "O death, where is thy sting?"—M.

Ver. 24.—*A great example and a great reward.* Notice the three distinctions in this patriarchal prophet.

I. HIS distinguished PIETY—walking with God; faith giving him knowledge, confidence in God, enjoyment of God.

II. HIS comparatively SHORT LIFE, and therefore speedy deliverance from the imperfection and suffering of this world, though his son lived the longest antediluvian life, and perhaps was a disciple of his father, teaching his doctrine. Those who, "*initiate*" (Enoch) great moral movements are seldom long-lived men.

III. HIS distinguished END—*translation.* God took him because he loved him. The anticipation of the resurrection was itself a prophecy. The seventh from Adam is taken to heaven without death, though all the rest died, however long they lived, as though to vivify the promise of the redeeming seed. It seems better to supply the word "*died*" rather than "*was.*" "*And he died* not; *for God took him*" —referring to the common formula of the patriarchal history, "*and he died.*" Walking with God is walking to God. Those who are like Enoch in their life will not be very different from him in their end; for the peace and triumph of a good man's end is little short of translation. The first of the prophets is thus gloriously signalised. Was it not like a special blessing from the beginning of the world on the life of consecrated ministration to God? Walking with God may be the description of any kind of service, but especially of the prophets'.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1, 2.—**And it came to pass.** Literally, *it was;* not in immediate sequence to the preceding chapter, but at some earlier point in the antediluvian period; perhaps about the time of Enoch (corresponding to that of Lamech the Cainite), if not in the days of Enos. Hävernick joins the passage with ch. iv. 26. **When men**—*ha'adham*, i. e. the human race in general, and not the posterity of Cain in particular (Ainsworth, Rosenmüller, Bush)—**began to multiply**—in virtue of the Divine blessing (ch. i. 28)—**on** (or over) **the face of the earth.** "Alluding to the population spreading itself out as well as increasing" (Bonar). **And daughters were born unto them.** Not referring to any special increase of the female sex (Lange), but simply indicating the quarter whence the

danger to the pious Sethites rose: "who became snares to the race of Seth" (Wordsworth). **That the sons of God.** *Bene-ha Elohim.* 1. Not young men of the upper ranks, as distinguished from maidens of humble birth (Onk., Jon., Sym., Aben Ezra); an opinion which "may now be regarded as exploded" (Lange). 2. Still less the angels (LXX.,—some MSS. having *ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ*,—Philo, Josephus, Justin Martyr, Clement, Tertullian, Luther, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Von Bohlen, Ewald, Baumgarten, Delitzsch, Kurtz, Hengstenberg, Alford); for (1) they are either *good* angels, in which case they might be rightly styled sons of God (Ps. xxix. 1; lxxxix. 7; Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7; Dan. iii. 25), though it is doubtful if this expression does not denote their official rather than natural relationship to God, but it is certain they would not be guilty of the sin here referred to; or they are *bad* angels, in which case they might readily enough commit the sin, if it were possible, but certainly they would not be called "the sons of God." (2) The statement of Jude (vers. 6, 7), though seemingly in favour of this interpretation, does not necessarily require it; since (*α*) it is uncertain whether the phrase "*τὸν ὅμοιον τούτοις τρόπον ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας*" refers to the angels or to "*αἱ περὶ αὐτὰς πόλεις*," in which case the antecedent of *τούτοις* will not be the *ἀγγέλοι* of ver. 6, but *Σόδομα καὶ Γόμοῤῥα* of ver. 7; (*β*) if even it refers to the angels it does not follow that the parallel between the cities and the angels consisted in the "going after strange flesh," and not rather in the fact that both departed from God, "the sin of the apostate angels being in God's view a sin of like kind spiritually with Sodom's going away from God's order of nature after strange flesh" (Fausset); (*γ*) again, granting that Jude's language describes the sin of the angels as one of carnal fornication with the daughters of men, the sin of which the sons of Elohim are represented as guilty is not *πορνεία*, but the forming of unhallowed matrimonial alliances. Hence (3) the assertion of our Lord in Luke xx. 35 is inconsistent with the hypothesis that by the sons of God are meant the angels; and (4) consistent exegesis requires that only extreme urgency, in fact absolute necessity (neither of which can be alleged here), should cause the sons of God to be looked for elsewhere than among the members of the human race. 3. The third interpretation, therefore, which regards the sons of God as the pious Sethites (Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, Augustine, Jerome, Calvin, Keil, Hävernick, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth, Quarry, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though not without its difficulties, has the most to recommend it. (1) It is natural, and not monstrous. (2) It is Scriptural, and not mythical (cf. Numbers xxv.; Judges iii.; 1 Kings xi., xvi.; Rev. ii., for sins of a similar description). (3) It accords with the designation subsequently given to the pious followers of God (cf. Deut. xiv. 1; xxxii. 5; Ps. lxxiii. 15; Prov. xiv. 26; Luke iii. 38; Rom. viii. 14; Gal. iii. 26). (4) It has a historical basis in the fact that *Seth* was regarded by his mother as a son from God (ch. iv. 25), and in the circumstance that already the Sethites had begun to call themselves by the name of Jehovah (ch. iv. 26). Dathius translates, "qui de nomine Dei vocabantur." (5) It is sufficient as an hypothesis, and therefore is entitled to the preference. **Saw the daughters of men** (not of the Cainitic race exclusively, but of men generally) **that they** were **fair**, and had regard to this alone in contracting marriages. "Instead of looking at the spiritual kinsmanship, they had an eye only to the pleasure of sense" (Lange). "What the historian condemns is not that regard was had to beauty, but that *mera libido regnaverit* in the choice of wives" (Calvin). **And they took them wives.** *Lakach isha,* "a standing expression throughout the Old Testament for the marriage relationship established by God at the creation, is never applied to *πορνεία*, or the simple act of physical connection, which is sufficient of itself to exclude any reference to angels" (Keil; cf. ch. iv. 19; xii. 19; xix. 14; Exod. vi. 25; 1 Sam. xxv. 43). **Of all whom they chose.** The emphasis on מִכֹּל (of all) signifies that, guided by a love of merely sensual attractions, they did not confine themselves to the beautiful daughters of the Sethite race, but selected their brides from the fair women of the Cainites, and perhaps with a preference for these. The opinion that they selected "both virgins and wives, they cared not whom," and "took them by violence" (Willet), is not warranted by the language of the historian. The sons of God were neither the Nephilim nor the Gibborim afterwards described, but the parents of the latter. The evil indicated is simply that of promiscuous marriages without regard to spiritual character.

Ver. 3.—**And the Lord**—Jehovah; not because due to the Jehovist (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso), but because the sin above specified was a direct violation of the footing of grace on which the Sethites stood — **said,** — to himself, *i. e.* purposed,—**My spirit**—neither "ira, seu rigida Dei justitia" (Venema), nor "the Divine spirit of life bestowed upon man, the principle of physical and ethical, natural and spiritual life" (Keil); but the Holy Ghost, the Ruach Elohim of ch. i. 2 —**shall not always strive.** *Lo-yadon:*—1. Shall not dwell (LXX., *οὐ μὴ καταμείνῃ*; Vulgate, *non permanebit;* Syriac, Onkelos).

2. Shall not be humbled, *i. e.* by dwelling in men (Gesenius, Tuch). 3. More probably, shall not rule (De Wette, Delitzsch, Kalisch, Fürst), or shall not judge (οὐ κρίνει), as the consequence of ruling (Symmachus, Rosenmüller, Keil), or shall not contend in judgment (*arguere, reprehendere;* cf. Eccles. vi. 10), *i. e.* strive with a man by moral force (Calvin, Michaelis, Dathe, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy, Bush). **With man, for that he also—*beshaggam*.** Either *be, shaggam*, inf. of *shagag*, to wander, with pron. suff. = "in their wandering" (Gesenius, Tuch, Keil)—the meaning being that men by their straying had proved themselves to be flesh, though a plural suffix with a singular pronoun following is inadmissible in Hebrew (Kalisch); or *be, sh* (contracted from *asher*), and *gam* (also) = *quoniam*. Cf. Judges v. 7; vi. 17; Song of Sol. i. 7 (A. V.). Though an Aramaic particle, "it must never be forgotten that Aramaisms are to be expected either in the most modern or *in the most ancient portions of Scripture*" ('Speaker's Commentary')—is **flesh.** Not "transitory beings" (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Tuch), or corporeal beings (Kalisch), but sinful beings; *bashar* being already employed in its ethical signification, like σάρξ in the New Testament, to denote "man's materiality as rendered ungodly by sin" (Keil). "The doctrine of the carnal mind (Rom. viii.) is merely the outgrowth of the thought expressed in this passage" (Murphy). **Yet his days**—not the individual's (Kalisch), which were not immediately curtailed to the limit mentioned, and, even after the Flood, extended far beyond it (*vide* ch. xi.); but the races, which were only to be prolonged in gracious respite (Calvin)—**shall be an hundred and twenty years.** Tuch, Colenso, and others, supposing this to have been said by God in Noah's 500th year, find a respite only of 100 years, instead of 120; but the historian does not assert that it was then God either formed or announced this determination.

Ver. 4.—**There were.** Not *became*, or arose, as if the giants were the fruit of the previously-mentioned mesalliances; but *already existed* contemporaneously with the sons of God (cf. Keil, Havernick, and Lange). **Giants.** *Nephilim*, from *naphal*, to fall; hence supposed to describe the offspring of the daughters of men and the fallen angels (Hoffman, Delitzsch). The LXX. translate by γίγαντες; whence the "giants" of the A. V. and Vulgate, which Luther rejects as fabulous; but Kalisch, on the strength of Num. xiii. 33, accepts as the certain import of the term. More probable is the interpretation which understands them as men of violence, roving, lawless gallants, "who fall on others;" robbers, or tyrants (Aquila, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Luther, Calvin, Kurtz, Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'). That they were "monsters, prodigies" (Tuch, Knobel), may be rejected, though it is not unlikely they were men of large physical stature, like the Anakim, Rephaim, and others (cf. Num. xiii. 33). **In the earth.** Not merely on it, but largely occupying the populated region. **In those days.** Previously referred to, *i. e.* of the mixed marriages. **And also**—*i. e.* in addition to these *nephilim*—**after that,**—*i. e.* after their uprising—**when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare** children **to them, the same** became **mighty men.** *Ha'gibborim*, literally, the strong, impetuous, heroes (cf. ch. x. 8). "They were probably more refined in manners and exalted in thought than their predecessors of pure Cainite descent" (Murphy). **Which were of old.** Not "of the world," as a note of character, taking *olam* as equivalent to αἰών, but a note of time, the narrator reporting from his own standpoint. **Men of renown.** Literally, *men of the name;* "the first nobility of the world, honourable robbers, who boasted of their wickedness" (Calvin) or gallants, whose names were often in men's mouths (Murphy). For contrary phrase, "men of no name," see Job xxx. 8.

Ver. 5.—**And God** (Jehovah, which should have been rendered 'the Lord') **saw**—indicative of the long-continued patience (Calvin) of the Deity, under whose immediate cognizance the great experiment of the primeval age of the world was wrought out—**that the wickedness** (*ra'ath;* from the root *raa*, to make a loud noise, to rage, hence to be wicked) **of man** (literally, *of the Adam:* this was the *first* aggravation of the wickedness which God beheld; it was the tumultuous rebellion of the being whom he had created in his own image) was **great** (it was no slight iniquity, but a wide-spread, firmly-rooted, and deeply-staining corruption, the *second* aggravation) **in the earth.** This was the *third* aggravation; it was in the world which he had made, and not only in it, but pervading it so "that integrity possessed no longer a single corner" (Calvin). **And that every imagination**—*yetzer*, a device, like pottery ware, from *yatza*, to fashion as a potter (ch. ii. 7; viii. 19). Cf. *yotzer*, a potter, used of God (Ps. xciv. 9, 20). Hence the fashioned purpose (ἐνθύμησις) as distinguished from the thought out of which it springs—"a distinction not generally or constantly recognised by the mental philosopher, though of essential importance in the theory of the mind" (Murphy)—**of the thoughts**—*mahshevoth;* from *hashal*, to think, to meditate = ἔννοια; cf. Heb. ix. 12 (T. Lewis)—**of his heart**—*lev*, the heart, the

seat of the affections and emotions of the mind. Cf. Judges xvi. 15 (love); Prov. xxxi. 11 (confidence); Prov. v. 12 (contempt); Ps. civ. 15 (joy). Here "the feeling, or deep mother heart, the state of soul, lying below all, and giving moral character to all (Lewis). Cf. the psychological division of Heb. iv. 12—**was only evil continually.** Literally, *every day.* "If this is not total depravity, how can language express it?" Though the phrase does not mean "from infancy," yet "the general doctrine" (of man's total and universal depravity) "is properly and consistently elicited hence" (Calvin).

Ver. 6.—**And it repented the Lord.** *Yinnahem;* from *naham,* to pant, to groan; Niph., to lament, to grieve because of the misery of others, also because of one's own actions; whence to repent (cf. German, *reuen;* English, *rue:* Gesenius); = "it grieved him at his heart." "Verbum nostræ pravitatæ accommodatum" (Chrysostom); "non est perturbatio, sed judicium, quo irrogatur pœna;" and again, "pœnitudo Dei est mutandorum immutabilis ratio" (Augustine). "Deus est immutabilis; sed cum ii, quos curat, mutantur, mutat ipse res, prout iis expedit quos curat" (Justin Martyr: Latin Version). "The repentance here ascribed to God does not properly belong to him, but has reference to our understanding of him" (Calvin). "The repentance of God does not presuppose any variableness in his nature or purposes" Keil). "A peculiarly strong anthropopathic expression, which, however, presents the truth that God, in consistency with his immutability, assumes a changed position in respect to changed man" (Lange). **That he had made man on the earth.** *I. e.* that he had created man at all, and in particular that he had settled him on the earth. **And it grieved him at his heart.** A touching indication that God did not hate man, and a clear proof that, though the Divine purpose is immutable, the Divine nature is not impassible.

Ver. 7.—**And the Lord said,**—"Before weird (doom) there's word: Northern Proverb" (Bonar)—**I will destroy**—literally, *blot or wipe out by washing* (cf. Num. v. 23; 2 Kings xxi. 13; Prov. xxx. 20; Isa. xxv. 8). "The idea of destroying by washing away is peculiarly appropriate to the Deluge, and the word is chosen on account of its significance" (Quarry)—**man whom I have created from the face of the earth.** An indirect refutation of the angel hypothesis (Keil, Lange). If the angels were the real authors of the moral corruption of the race, why are they not sentenced as the serpent was in ch. iii. 14? **Both man, and beast, and the creeping thing.** Literally, *from man unto beast,* &c. The lower creatures were involved in the punishment of man neither because of any moral corruption which had entered into them, nor as sharing in the atonement for human sins (Knobel); but rather on the ground of man's sovereignty over the animal world, and its dependence on him (Keil, Lange), and in exemplification of that great principle of Divine government by which the penal consequences of moral evil are allowed to extend beyond the immediate actor (cf. Rom. viii. 20). **For it repenteth me that I have made them.** *Vide supra* on ver. 6.

Ver. 8.—**But Noah found grace.** *Hēn;* the same letters as in Noah, but reversed (cf. ch. xviii. 3; xxxix. 4; 1 Kings xi. 19). The present is the first occurrence of the word in Scripture. "Now for the first time *grace* finds a tongue to express its name" (Murphy); and it clearly signifies the same thing as in Rom. iv., v., Ephes. ii., Gal. ii., the gratuitous favour of God to sinful men.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—8.—"*The days that were before the flood*" (Matt. xxiv. 38). I. SIN INCREASING. 1. *Licentiousness* raging. The special form it assumed was that of sensuous gratification, leading to a violation of the law of marriage. In the seventh age Lamech the Cainite became a polygamist. By and by the sons of God, captivated by the charms of beauty, cast aside the bonds of self-restraint, and took them wives of all whom they chose. (1) They married with ungodly women,—beautiful, perhaps talented and accomplished, like the Adahs, Naamahs, and Zillahs of the race of Cain, but unbelieving and ungodly,—which, as the professing followers of Jehovah, they should not have done. Holy Scripture forbids the union of believers with unbelievers (2 Cor. vi. 14). (2) They married to please their fancies, leaving altogether out of reckoning, as necessary qualifications in their partners, spiritual affinity, intellectual compatibility, and even general suitability, and fixing their eyes only on what charmed the senses, physical loveliness. (3) They married as many wives as they desired. Lamech, the first polygamist, was satisfied with two; the degenerate sons of Seth, having yielded to self-indulgence, only limited their wives by the demands of their passion. 2. *Violence* prevailing. Those who begin by breaking the laws of

God are not likely to end by keeping those of man. From the beginning a characteristic of the wicked line (witness Cain and Lamech), lawlessness at length passed over to the holy seed. What with the Nephilim on the one hand (probably belonging to the line of Cain) and the Gibborim on the other (the offspring of the degenerate Sethites), the world was overrun with tyrants. *Sheer brute force was the ruler*, and the only code of morals was "Be strong." Moral purity alone has a God-given right to occupy the supreme seat of influence and power upon the earth. After that, intellectual ability. Mere physical strength, colossal stature, immense bulk, were designed for subjection and subordination. The subversion of this Divinely-appointed order results in tyranny; and, of all tyrannies, that of strong, coarse, passion-driven animalism is the worst. And this was the condition of mankind in these antediluvian ages. And what was even a worse symptom of the times, *the people loved to have it so*. Those lawless robbers and tyrants and these reckless, roving gallants were men of name and fame, in everybody's mouth, as the popular heroes of the day. As mere physical beauty was woman's pathway to marriage, so was sheer brute force, displaying itself in feats of daring and of blood, man's road to renown. 3. *Corruption* deepening. Most appalling is the picture sketched by the historian of the condition of the Adam whom God at first created in his own image, implying—(1) Complete extinction of the higher nature. Through persistence in the downward path of sin it had at length become lost, swallowed up, in the low, carnal portion of his being called the "flesh." (2) Complete supremacy of evil—evil in the imaginations, evil in the thoughts, evil in the heart, nothing but evil; and that not temporarily, but always; nor in the case of one or two individuals merely, but in the case of all, with one solitary exception. (3) Complete insensibility to Divine influences. Hence the withdrawal of God's Spirit. There was no use for further striving to restrain or improve them; they were "past feeling" (Ephes. iv. 19).

II. GOD REPENTING. 1. A *mysterious* fact. "We do not gain much by attempting to explain philosophically such states or movements of the Divine mind. They are strictly ἄῤῥητα—ineffable. So the Scripture itself represents them—Isa. lv. 9" (Tayler Lewis). What is here asserted of the Divine thoughts is likewise true of the Divine emotions; like the Deity himself, they are past finding out. 2. A *real* fact. The language describes something real on the part of God. If it is figurative, then there must be something of which it is the figure; and that something is the Divine grief and repentance. These, however, are realities that belong to a realm which the human intellect cannot traverse. As of the Divine personality man's personality is but an image or reflection, so of the Divine affections and emotions are man's affections and emotions only shadows. Man repents when he changes his mind, or his attitude, or his actions. God repents when his thoughts are changed, when his feelings are turned, when his acts are reversed. But God is "of one mind, and who can turn him?" He is "without variableness and shadow of turning;" "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Hence we rather try to picture to ourselves the Divine penitence as expressive of the changed attitude which the immutable Deity maintains towards things that are opposite, such as holiness and sin. 3. An *instructive* fact, telling us (1) that the Divine nature is not impassible; (2) that sin is not the end of man's creation; and (3) that a sinful man is a disappointment to God. 4. An *ominous* fact. As thus explained, the grief and penitence of God describe the effect which human sin ever have upon the Divine nature. It fills him with heart-felt grief and pity. It excites all the fathomless ocean of sympathy for sinning men with which his infinite bosom is filled. But at the same time, and notwithstanding this, it moves him to inflict judicial retribution. "And the Lord said, I will destroy man."

III. GRACE OPERATING. 1. *In restraining sinners*. It was impossible that God could leave men to rush headlong to their own destruction without interposing obstacles in their path. In the way of these apostates of the human race he erected quite a series of barriers to keep them back from perdition. He gave them (1) a gospel of mercy in the promise of the woman's seed; (2) a ministry of mercy, raising up and maintaining a succession of pious men to preach the gospel, and warn them against the ways of sin; (3) a Spirit of mercy to strive within them; (4) a providence of mercy, (*a*) measuring out to them a long term of years, yet (*b*) solemnly

reminding them of their mortality, and finally (*c*) giving them a reprieve, even after they were sentenced to destruction. 2. *In saving believers.* (1) Accepting them as he accepted Noah; (2) preserving them amid the general defection of the times, as he did Noah, who without Divine assistance must have been inevitably swept away in the general current of ungodliness; (3) providing for their safety against the coming judgment. They were all removed by death before the flood came, and Noah was delivered by the ark.

Lessons:—1. The terrible degeneracy of human nature. 2. The danger of mixed marriages. 3. God may pity, but he must likewise punish, the evil-doer. 4. The day of grace has its limits. 5. If a soul will go to perdition, it must do so over many mercies. 6. God never leaves himself without a witness, even in the worst of times.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—8.—*The work of sin.* The moral chaos out of which the new order is about to be evolved. We find these features in the corrupt state depicted.

I. Ill-assorted marriages. The sons of God—*i. e.* the seed of the righteous, such men as the patriarchs described in ch. v., men who walked with God, and were his prophets—fell away from their allegiance to the Divine order, and went after the daughters of the Cainites. The self-will and mere carnal affections are denoted by the expression "all whom they chose."

II. Violence and military ambition. The giants were the "nephilim," those who assaulted and fell upon their neighbours. The increase of such men is distinctly traced to the corrupt alliances.

III. The withdrawal by judgment of the Divine Spirit from man, by which may be meant not only the individual degeneracy which we see exemplified in such a case as Cain, driven out from the presence of the Lord, given up to a reprobate mind, and afterwards in Pharaoh; but the withdrawal of prophecy and such special spiritual communications as had been given by such men as Enoch.

IV. The shortening of human life. Since the higher moral influence of Christianity has been felt in society during the last three centuries, it is calculated that the average length of human life has been increased twofold. The anthropomorphism of these verses is in perfect accordance with the tone of the whole Book of Genesis, and is not in the least a perversion of truth. It is rather a revelation of truth, as anticipating the great central fact of revelation, God manifest in the flesh. But why is God said to have determined to destroy the face of the earth, the animal creation with the sinful man? Because the life of man involved that of the creatures round him. "The earth is filled with violence." To a large extent the beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air participate in the disorder of the human race, being rendered unnaturally savage and degenerate in their condition by man's disorderly ways. Moreover, any destruction which should sweep away a whole race of men must involve the lower creation. The defeat of a king is the defeat of his subjects. In all this corruption and misery there is yet, by the grace of God, one oasis of spiritual life, the family of Noah. He found grace not because he earned it, but because he kept what had been given him, both through his ancestors and by the work of the Spirit in his own heart.—R.

Vers. 1—5.—*The demoralisation of the race.* This was due to—

I. The long lives of the antediluvians. Long life, if helpful to the good, is much more injurious to the wicked. Giants in health and life are often giants in wickedness.

II. The unholy alliances of the Sethites and Cainites. Nothing so demoralising as marriage with an evil woman. Its bad effects are commonly transmitted to, and intensified in, posterity.

III. The depravity induced by the fall, which was universal in its extent, and gradually deepening in its intensity.

Lessons:—1. The inherent evil of our natures. 2. The curse clinging to ungodliness. 3. The true function of worldly sorrows and of frequent and early death.—W. R.

Ver. 3.—*Probation, approbation, and reprobation.* "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man," &c. The life of man, whether longer or shorter, is a time during which the Spirit of God strives with him. It is at once in judgment and in mercy that the strife is not prolonged; for where there is continued opposition to the will of God there is continual laying up of judgment against the day of wrath. The allotted time of man upon the earth is sufficient for the required probation, clearly manifesting the direction of the will, the decided choice of the heart. Here is—

I. THE GREAT MORAL FACT OF MAN'S CONDITION IN HIS FLESHLY STATE. The striving of God's Spirit with him. 1. In the order of the world and of human life. 2. In the revelation of truth and positive appeals of the Divine word. 3. In the constant nearness and influence of spiritual society. 4. In the working of conscience and the moral instincts generally.

II. THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT OF SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE at once a righteous limitation and a gracious concentration. That which is unlimited is apt to be undervalued. *Not always* shall the Spirit strive. 1. *Individually* this is testified. A heart which knows not the day of its visitation becomes hardened. 2. In the history of spiritual work *in communities*. Times of refreshing generally followed by withdrawments of power. The limit of life itself is before us all. *Not always* can we hear the voice and see the open door.

III. THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL ARE INTIMATELY RELATED TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE LIFE OF MAN. He who decreed the length of days to his creature did also strive with the evil of his fallen nature that he might cast it out. The hundred and twenty years are seldom reached; but is it not because the evil is so obstinately retained? Those whose spirit is most in fellowship with the Spirit of God are least weighed down with the burden of the flesh, are strongest to resist the wearing, wasting influence of the world.

IV. THE STRIVING OF GOD'S SPIRIT WITH US MAY CEASE. What follows? To fall on the stone is to be broken, to be under it is to be crushed. The alternative is before every human life—to be dealt with as with God or against him. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" The progressive revelations of the Bible point to the winding up of all earthly history. *Not always* strife. Be ye reconciled to God.—R.

Ver. 3.—*The striving of the Spirit* implies—

I. THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

II. THE GRANTING OF GOD'S SPIRIT TO OUR FALLEN WORLD.

III. That God's Spirit is OPPOSED BY MAN.

IV. That the effort of God's Spirit for man's salvation, even though not successful, COMES TO AN END.

V. That the striving of God's Spirit comes to an end not because God's willingness to help comes to an end, but because HUMAN NATURE SINKS BEYOND THE POSSIBILITY OF HELP.

VI. That it belongs to God as Sovereign to FIX THE DAY OF GRACE.

Learn—1. The richness of Divine mercy. 2. The possibility of falling away beyond the hope of repentance. 3. The fact that our day of grace is limited. 4. The certainty that, however short, the day of grace which we enjoy is available for salvation.—W. R.

§ 4. THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH (CH. VI. 9—IX. 29).

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 9.—**These are the generations of Noah.** "Novi capitis initium" = "hæc est historia Noachi" (Rosenmüller; cf. ch. v. 1). **Noah** (*vide* ch. v. 29) **was a just man.** צַדִּיק: not of spotless innocence (Knobel); but upright, honest, virtuous, pious (*vir probus*); from צָדַק, to be straight, hence to be just; Piel to render just or righteous (Eccl. Lat., *justificare*), to declare any one just or innocent (Gesenius); better "justified" or declared righteous, being derived from the Piel form of the verb (Fürst). "Evidently the right-

cousness here meant is that which represents him as justified in view of the judgment of the Flood, by reason of his faith, Heb. xi. 7" (Lange). "To be just is to be right in point of law, and thereby entitled to all the blessings of the acquitted and justified. When applied to the guilty this epithet implies pardon of sin among other benefits of grace" (Murphy). **And perfect.** תָּמִים: complete, whole (τέλειος, *integer*); *i. e.* perfect in the sense not of sinlessness, but of moral integrity (Gesenius, Calvin). It describes "completeness of parts rather than of degrees in the renewed character" (Bush). "The just is the right in law, the perfect is the tested in holiness" (Murphy). If, however, the term is equivalent to the τελείωσις of the Christian system (1 Cor. ii. 6; Heb. vii. 11), it denotes that complete readjustment of the being of a sinful man to the law of God, both legally and morally, which is effected by the whole work of Christ for man and in man; it is "the establishment of complete, unclouded, and enduring communion with God, and the full realisation of a state of peace with him which, founded on a true and ever valid remission of sins, has for its consummation eternal glory" (Delitzsch on Heb. vii. 11). **In his generations.** בְּדֹרֹתָיו, from דּוּר, to go in a circle; hence a circuit of years; an age or generation (*generatio, seculum*) of men. The clause marks not simply the sphere of Noah's virtue, among his contemporaries, or only the duration of his piety, throughout his lifetime, but likewise the constancy of his religion, which, when surrounded by the filth of iniquity on every side, contracted no contagion (Calvin). "It is probable, moreover, that he was of pure descent, and in that respect also distinguished from his contemporaries, who were the offspring of promiscuous marriages between the godly and the ungodly" (Murphy). **And Noah walked with God.** The special form in which his just and perfect character revealed itself amongst his sinful contemporaries. For the import of the phrase see on ch. v. 22. Noah was also a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. ii. 5), and probably announced to the wicked age in which he lived the coming of the Flood (Heb. xi. 7).

Ver. 10.—**And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth** (cf. ch. v. 32). Here (in the story of the Flood) if anywhere, observes Rosenmüller, can traces be detected of two distinct documents (*duorum monumentorum*), in the alternate use of the names of the Deity, the frequent repetitions of the same things, and the use of peculiar forms of expression; and in vers. 9—13, compared with ch. vi. 5—8, Bleek, Tuch, Colenso, and others find the first instance of needless repetition, on the supposition of the unity of the narrative, but a sure index of the Elohistic pen, on the hypothesis of different authors; but the so-called "repetition" is explained by remembering that ch. vi. 5—8 forms the close of a section "bringing down the history to the point at which the degeneracy of mankind causes God to resolve on the destruction of the world," while the new section, which otherwise would begin too abruptly, introduces the account of the Deluge by a brief description of its cause (cf. Quarry, p. 367). The structure of the narrative here is not different from what it appears elsewhere (cf. ch. ii. 4; v. 1).

Ver. 11.—**The earth**—(1) its inhabitants, as in ver. 11 (cf. Gen. xi. 1)—mankind being denominated earth because wholly earthly (Chrysostom); (2) the land, which had become defiled through their wickedness (vers. 12, 13; cf. Ps. cvii. 34)—**also** (literally, *and the earth*) **was corrupt**—in a moral sense, the causes and forms of which corruption have already been detailed in the preceding paragraph. The term is elsewhere applied to idolatry, or the sin of perverting and depraving the worship of God (Exod. xxxii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 5; Judges ii. 19; 2 Chron. xxvii. 2); but the special sins of the antediluvians were rather licentiousness and lawlessness—**before God**—*i. e.* openly, publicly, flagrantly, and presumptuously (cf. ch. x. 9); noting the intensity of their wickedness, or intimating the fact that God had *seen* their corruption, and so commending the Divine long-suffering (Calvin), —**and the earth was filled with violence.** "The outward exhibition of inward carnality" (Murphy); "injurious and cruel dealing, the violating of duties towards men, 'rapines or robberies (Chaldee)'" (Ainsworth). Cf. ch. xlix. 5; Joel iii. 19; Obad. x.

Ver. 12.—**And God looked upon the earth.** "God knows at all times what is doing in our world, but his looking upon the earth denotes a special observance of it, as though he had instituted an inquiry into its real condition" (Bush; cf. Ps. xiv. 2; xxxiii. 13, 14; liii. 2, 3). **And, behold, it was corrupt.** "Everything stood in sharpest contradiction with that good state which God the Creator had established" (Delitzsch, quoted by Lange). The nature of this corruption is further indicated. **For all flesh** — *i. e.* the human race, who are so characterised here not so much for their frailty (Isa. xl. 5, 6) as for their moral and spiritual degeneracy (Gen. vi. 3, q. v.) — **had corrupted** — *shachuth* (καταφθείρω, LXX.); literally, had destroyed, wrecked, and ruined, wholly subverted and overthrown — **his way** — *derech* (from *darach*, to tread with the feet), a going; hence a journey, a way; *e. g.* (1) of living or acting (Prov. xii. 15; 1 Sam. xviii. 14); (2) of worshipping God—ὁδός, Acts xix. 9, 23 (Ps. cxxxix. 24; Amos viii. 14). Here it sig-

nifies the entire plan and course of life in all its ethical and religious aspects as designed for man by God (cf. Ps. cxix. 9; and contrast "the way of Cain," Jude 11; "the way of Balaam," 2 Pet. ii. 15)—**upon the earth.**

Ver. 13.—**And God said unto Noah, The end.** קֵץ (from Hophal of קָצַץ, to cut off): that which is cut off, the end of a time (Gen. iv. 3) or of a space (Isa. xxxvii. 24); specially the end or destruction of a people (Ezek. vii. 2; Amos viii. 2), in which sense it is to be here understood (Gesenius, Rosenmüller). The rendering which regards *kêtz* as, like τέλος = the completion, consummation, fulness of a thing (here of human fleshliness or wickedness), and the following clause as epexegetic of the present (Bush), though admissible in respect of Scriptural usage (cf. Jer. li. 13; Eccles. xii. 13; Rom. x. 4) and contextual harmony, is scarcely so obvious; while a third, that the end spoken of is the issue to which the moral corruption of the world was inevitably tending (Keil, Lange), does not materially differ from the first. **Of all flesh.** *I. e.* of the human race, of course with the exception of Noah and his family, which "teaches us to beware of applying an inflexible literality to such terms as *all*, when used in the sense of ordinary conversation" (Murphy). **Is come before me.** Literally, *before my face.* Not "a me constitutus est" (Gesenius), "is decreed before my throne" (Kalisch); but, "is in the contemplation of my mind as an event soon to be realised" (Murphy), with perhaps a glance at the circumstance that man's ruin had not been sought by God, but, as it were, had thrust itself upon his notice as a thing that could no longer be delayed. If בָּא לְפָנַי = the similar expression בָּא אֶל, which, when applied to rumours, signifies to reach the ear (cf. ch. xviii. 21; Exod. iii. 9; 1 Kings ii. 28; Esther ix. 11), it may likewise indicate the closeness or near approach of the impending calamity. **For the earth is filled with violence through them.** More correctly, "*from their faces;*" "a facie eorum" (Vulgate). That is, "the flood of wickedness which comes up before God's face goes out from their face" in the sense of being perpetrated openly (Lange), and "by their conscious agency" (Alford). **And, behold, I will destroy them.** Literally, *and behold me destroying them.* The verb is the same as is translated "corrupt" in ver. 12, q. v., as if to convey the idea of fitting retribution (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 17: εἴτις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός; Rev. xi. 18: καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν). Whether this destruction which was threatened against the antediluvian sinners extended to the loss of their souls throughout eternity may be reasoned (*pro* and *con*) from other Scriptures, but cannot be determined from this place, which refers solely to the extinction of their bodily lives. **With the earth.** Not *from* the earth (Samaritan), or *on* the earth (Syriac, Rosenmüller), or *even* the earth, "thus identifying the earth with its inhabitants" (Bush), but, together with the earth (Kalisch, Keil, Alford; cf. ch. ix. 11; καὶ τὴν γῆν, LXX.). The universality of representation which characterises this section (vers. 9—13) is regarded by Davidson, Colenso, and others as contradictory of ch. vi. 5, which depicts the corruption as *only human*, and limits the destruction to the race of man. But as the two accounts belong to different subdivisions of the book, they cannot properly be viewed as contradictory (cf. 'Quarry on Genesis,' pp. 370, 371).

Ver. 14.—**Make thee an ark.** תֵּבַת, constr. of תֵּבָה, etymology unknown (Gesenius); of Shemitic origin, from תָּבָה, to be hollow (Fürst); of Egyptian derivation, a boat being called *tept* (Keil, Kalisch, Knobel); from the Sanscrit *pota*, a pot or boat (Bohlen); "a peculiar archaic term for a very unusual thing, like מַבּוּל, the term for the Flood itself" (T. Lewis); translated κιβωτός, θίβη (LXX.), *arca* (Vulgate), λάρναξ (Nicolas Damascenus), πλοῖον (Berosus); not a ship in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but a box or chest (cf. Exod. ii. 3) capable of floating on the waters. "Similar vessels, generally, however, drawn by horses or men, were and are still used in some parts of Europe and Asia" (Kalisch). **Of gopher wood.** Literally, woods of gopher (גֹּפֶר: ἅπαξ λεγ., the root of which, like כָּפַר, seems to signify to cover (Kalisch); *ligna bituminata* (Vulgate); pitch trees, resinous trees, such as are used in ship-building (Gesenius); most likely cypress, κυπάρισσος (Bochart, Celsius, Keil), which was used "in some parts of Asia exclusively as the material for ships, in Athens for coffins, and in Egypt for mummy cases" (Kalisch). "It is said too that the gates of St. Peter's Church at Rome (made of this wood), which lasted from the time of Constantine to that of Eugene IV., *i. e.* 1100 years, had in that period suffered no decay" (Bush). **Rooms**—*kinnim*, nests, applied metaphorically to the chambers of the ark—**shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.** וְכָפַרְתָּ בַּכֹּפֶר: literally, *shalt cover it with a covering.* The substance to be employed was probably bitumen or asphalt (ἄσφαλτος, LXX.; *bitumen*, Vulgate). The root (cf. English, *cover*) signifies also to pardon sin, *i. e.* to cover them from God's sight (Ps. lxv. 3; lxxviii. 38; 2 Chron. xxx. 18), and to make expiation for sin, *i. e.*

to obtain covering for them (ch. xxxii. 20; Dan. ix. 24); whence *copher* is used for a ransom (Exod. xxi. 30; xxx. 12), and *capporeth*, the covering of the ark (Exod. xxv. 17), for the mercy-seat (ἱλαστήριον, LXX.; *propitiatorium*, Vulgate).

Ver. 15.—**And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of.** The shape of it is not described, but only its dimensions given. **The length of the ark** shall be **three hundred cubits,**—a cubit = the length from the elbow to the middle finger (Deut. iii. 11); nearly twenty-two inches, if the sacred cubit; if the common, eighteen inches,—**the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.** With a cubit of twenty-one inches, the length would be 525 feet, the breadth 87 feet 6 inches, dimensions not dissimilar to those of the *Great Eastern* which is 680 feet long, 83 feet broad, and 58 feet deep. The cubic contents of the ark with these dimensions would be 2,411,718·75 feet, which, allowing forty cubic feet per ton, would give a carrying capacity equal to 32,800 tons. P. Jansen of Holland, in 1609, proved by actual experiment that a ship constructed after the pattern of the ark, though not adapted for sailing, would in reality carry a cargo greater by one-third than any other form of like cubical content. The difficulty of building a vessel of such enormous magnitude, T. Lewis thinks, may be got over by remembering the extreme simplicity of its structure, the length of time allowed for its erection, the physical constitution of the builders, and the facilities for obtaining materials which may have existed in abundance in their vicinity. Bishop Wilkins ('Essay towards a Philosophical Character and Language'), Dr. A. Clarke, and Bush are satisfied that the ark was large enough to contain all the animals directed to be taken into it, along with provision for a twelvemonth; but computations founded on the number of the species presently existing must of necessity be precarious; and besides, it is at least doubtful whether the Deluge was universal, or only partial and local, in which case the difficulty (so called) completely vanishes.

Ver. 16.—**A window**—צֹהַר, from צָהַר, to shine, hence light (צָהֳרַיִם, double light, or light of midday—ch. xliii. 16; Jer. vi. 4). Not the window which Noah afterwards opened to let out the dove, which is called חַלּוֹן (ch. viii. 6), but obviously a lighting apparatus, which may have been a series of windows (Gesenius), scarcely one (Theodotion, *θύραν*; Symmachus, *διαφανές*; Vulgate, *fenestram;* Kimchi, Luther, Calvin); or an opening running along the top of the sides of the ark, occupied by some translucent substance, and sheltered by the eaves of the roof (Knobel); or, what appears more probable, a light opening in the upper deck, stretching along the entire length, and continued down through the different stories (Baumgarten, Lange); or, if the roof sloped, as is most likely, an aperture along the ridge, which would admit the clear light of heaven (*tsōhar*), and serve as a meridional line enabling Noah and the inmates of the ark to ascertain the hour of noon (Tayler Lewis). Keil and Murphy think we can form no proper conception of the light arrangement of the ark. The conjecture of Schultens, which is followed by Dathius, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, and others, that the *tsōhar* meant the covering (*tectum, dorsum*), "quo sane hoc ædificium carere non potuit, propter pluviam tot dierum continuam," is obviously incorrect—**shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit**—to a cubit, *i. e.* all but a cubit (T. Lewis); into a cubit, *i. e.* to the extent of a cubit (Ainsworth); by the cubit, *i. e.* by a just measure (Kalisch)—**shalt thou finish it**—not the window (Gesenius, Ewald, Tuch), the feminine suffix agreeing with *tebah*, which is feminine, and not with *tsōhar*, which is masculine; but the ark—**above.** Literally, *from above to above;* i. e., according to the above interpretations of the preposition, either the roof, after the construction of the windows, should be regularly finished "by the just measure" (Kalisch); or the roof should be arched but a cubit, that it might be almost flat (Ainsworth); or from the eaves up toward the ridge it should be completed, leaving a cubit open or unfinished (T. Lewis). **And the door of the ark**—the opening which should admit its inmates—**shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third** stories. The word stories is not in the original, but some such word must be supplied. Lange thinks that each flat or story had an entrance or door in the side.

Ver. 17.—**And, behold, I, even I.** More correctly, "And I, behold, I," an emphatic assertion that what was coming was a Divine visitation, and not simply a natural occurrence. **Do bring.** Literally, *bringing*, the participle standing in place of the finite verb to indicate the certainty of the future action (*vide* Gesenius, 'Gram.,' § 134). **A flood of waters upon the earth.** מַבּוּל, pronounced by Bohlen "far-fetched," "is an archaic word coined expressly for the waters of Noah (Isa. xliv. 9), and is used nowhere else except Psalm xxix. 10—waters upon the earth" (Keil). The first intimation of the means to be employed in inflicting judgment on the morally corrupted world. **To destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.** The fishes

only being excepted, "either (1) because they did not live in the same element wherein man lived and sinned; or (2) because they were not so instrumental in man's sins as the beasts might be; or (3) because man had a greater command over the beasts than over the fishes, and greater service and benefit from them" (Poole).

Ver. 18.—**But with thee will I establish my covenant.** בְּרִית (διαθήκη, LXX.; *fœdus*, Vulgate; *testamentum*, N. T.), from בָּרָא, to cut or carve; hence a covenant, from the custom of passing between the divided pieces of the victims slain on the occasion of making such solemn compacts (cf. ch. xv. 9; Gesenius); from בָּרָה, to eat, hence an eating together, a banquet (cf. ch. xxxi. 54; Lee). On the Bible idea of covenant see ch. xv. 9. My covenant = the already well-known covenant which I have made with man. **And thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.** This was the substance of the covenant agreement so far as Noah was concerned. The next three verses describe the arrangements about the animals.

Vers. 19—21.—**And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every** sort (literally, *by twos*, i. e. in pairs) **shalt thou bring into**—or cause to enter, *i. e.* receive them when they come (ver. 20)—**the ark, to keep** them **alive**—literally, *to cause to live;* ἵνα τρέφῃς (LXX.); in order to preserve alive (sc. the animals)—**with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind** (literally, *of the fowl after its kind*), **and of cattle after their kind** (literally, *of the cattle after its kind*), **of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every** sort **shall come unto thee.** "Non hominis actu, sed Dei nutu" (Augustine). Perhaps through an instinctive presentiment of the impending calamity (Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee** (collecting sufficient for a twelvemonth's sustenance); **and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.**

Ver. 22.—**Thus did Noah; according to all that God** (Elohim; in ch. vii. 5 it is Jehovah) **commanded** (with respect to the building of the ark, the receiving of the animals, the collecting of provisions) **him, so did he.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 9—22.—*The building of the ark.* I. THE MAN AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. A common saying, and one possessed of a show of wisdom, that a person seldom rises far above the average goodness, or sinks far below the average wickedness, of the age in which he lives. Yet it is precisely in proportion as individuals either excel or fall beneath their generation that they are able to affect it for good or evil. All epoch-making men are of this stamp. Noah, it is obvious, was not a man whose character was shaped by his contemporaries. In respect of three things, the contrast between him and them was as great and decided as could well be imagined. 1. *Legal standing.* Noah was a just man, *i. e.* a sinner justified by his believing acceptance of the gospel promise of the woman's seed; while they were corrupt, or had declined into infidelity. 2. *Spiritual character.* Noah was perfect in the sense that his heart was right with God, and his nature was renewed by Divine grace; they were wanting in all the essential characteristics of true being, "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the hardness of their hearts." 3. *Outer walk.* As a consequence the daily life of Noah was one of eminent piety—a walking with God, like that of Enoch; while theirs was one of impious defiance of the laws of God, and ruthless oppression of the rights of men. Learn (1) that it is quite possible to be pious in the midst of evil times; and (2) that only a life of close communion with God will prevent one from being overborne by the wickedness of his age.

II. THE EVENT AND ITS OCCASION. The event was—1. *Appalling in its form.* The destruction of a world by a flood of waters. "In the beginning," at God's command, the goodly fabric had risen from the waters (ch. i. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 5), radiant in beauty, swimming in a sea of light, rejoicing its Creator's heart (ch. i. 31); now it was about to return to the dark and formless matrix whence it sprang. If the world's birth woke music among the morning stars (Job xxxviii. 7), surely its destruction was enough to make the angels weep! 2. *Universal in its sweep.* Without engaging at present in any controversy as to the actual extent of the Deluge, we may notice that Elohim represents it as destructive of the entire human race (Noah and his family excepted). Considering the impression made upon our hearts by the

report of some sudden accident (the explosion of a mine, the sinking of a ship, the collision of a train), in which a number of lives are lost, it is not wonderful that the echo of this stupendous catastrophe should have vibrated through the world (see 'Traditions of the Deluge'). 3. *Supernatural in its origin.* It was not an ordinary occurrence, but a distinctly miraculous phenomenon. "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth." 4. *Punitive in its purpose.* Its retributive character was distinctly implied in the form of its announcement—"I will destroy." All temporal calamities are not of this description. That all suffering is penal was the mistake of Job's friends (Job iv. 7, *et passim*), though not of Job himself, and certainly it is not the teaching of the Bible (cf. Job xxxiii. 29; Ps. xciv. 12; Rom. viii. 28; 2 Cor. iv. 17). But this was—5. *Melancholy in its occasion*—the total, absolute, and radical corruption of the earth's inhabitants. Through unbelief and disobedience they had ruined the moral nature which God had given them; and now there was no help for it but that they should be swept away. 6. *Inevitable in its coming.* Implied in one interpretation of the words "the end of all flesh" (*vide* Expos.). Sin ever carries its own retribution in its bosom; not merely, however, in recoiling upon itself with inward misery, sense of loss, weakness, depravation; but likewise in necessitating the infliction on the part of Elohim of positive retribution. 7. *Near in its approach.* "Behold, I am bringing!" as if it were already at hand. See here (1) the danger of sin; (2) the certainty of retribution; (3) the righteousness of the wrath of God; (4) the mercy of God in making this known to sinners, as he foretold the Flood to the antediluvians.

III. THE COMMISSION AND ITS EXECUTION. 1. *It related to the safety of the Church* (ver. 18). At that time the antediluvian Church was small, consisting only of Noah and his family (ch. vii. 1), and in all probability uninfluential and despised, by the Gibborim and Nephilim of the day ridiculed and oppressed. Endangered by the immorality and violence of the times, it was likewise imperilled by the impending Deluge. Yet God never leaves his people unprotected or unprovided for (Deut. xxxiii. 12; Ps. xxxiv. 15; xlvi. 5; Zech. ii. 5; 2 Pet. ii. 9). The Church of God and Christ is imperishable (Isa. liv. 17; Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 14). That was symbolised to Israel by the burning bush (Exod. iii. 2), and to all postdiluvian time by the ark. It was impossible that God could be unconcerned about the safety of the believing remnant in antediluvian times. The commission which came to Noah concerned the rescue of himself and children. 2. *It was Divinely given* (vers. 13, 14). Salvation is of the Lord (Ps. iii. 8; Jonah ii. 9). Manifestly only God could have provided for the safety of Noah and his family. Directions from any other quarter, or even expedients devised by himself, must have proved both futile and presumptuous. So, whatever instructions may be given to man with a view to salvation must come from God, if they are to be successful. Schemes of redemption may be beautiful, ingenious, attractive, hopeful; if they are not God's schemes they are worthless (Isa. xliii. 11; Hosea xiii. 4). 3. *It was minutely detailed* (vers. 14—16). The plan which God proposed to Noah for the salvation of himself and house was building of an ark according to Divinely-prepared specifications. In its construction there was no room left for the exercise of inventive genius. Like the tabernacle in the wilderness, it was fashioned according to a God-given pattern. And so, in all that concerns the salvation of sinful men, from first to last the plan is God's, admitting neither of addition nor subtraction, correction nor improvement, at the hands of the men themselves. 4. *It was believingly received* (Heb. xi. 7). Perhaps the last device that would ever have suggested itself to the mind of Noah, very likely ridiculed by his contemporaries as an act of folly, probably at times regarded with considerable misgivings by the patriarch himself, and certainly an undertaking that would involve immense labour, patient endurance, heroic self-sacrifice, it was yet accepted in a spirit of meek and unquestioning faith. And so should it be with us. When God speaks we should hear. When he directs we should obey. 5. *It was obediently carried through* (ver. 22). This was the best test of his faith. Where obedience is absent, faith is not present. Faith always discovers its existence by obedience (Heb. xi. 8). Learn—(1) God's care of his people. (2) The sufficiency of God's plan of salvation. (3) The wisdom of implicitly following God's directions.

Ver. 22.—*The obedience of Noah.* I. PIOUS in its PRINCIPLE. II PROMPT in its OPERATION. III. LABORIOUS in its EXERCISE. IV. UNIVERSAL in its EXTENT. V. PERSEVERING in its COURSE. VI. SUCCESSFUL in its END.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 9—22.—*Righteousness and peace.* The description of Noah is very similar to that of Enoch, just and perfect in his generation, that is, blameless in his walk before men, which is saying much of one who lived in a time of universal corruption. And he walked with God, *i. e.* devout and religious, and, from the analogy of the preceding use of the words, we may say, a prophet. He preached righteousness both with lip and life. To this good and great prophet the announcement is made of the coming judgment. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." The earth is filled with violence through men, and therefore with man must be destroyed. With the message of judgment there is also the message of mercy, as at the first.

THE ARK, AN EMBLEM OF SALVATION BY GRACE, AS AFTERWARDS (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 19—22). The offer of salvation was a trial of faith. God did not himself provide the ark; it was made by the hands of men, of earthly materials, with ordinary earthly measurements and appointments, and prepared as for an ordinary occasion. There was nothing in the visible ark to stumble faith; but, as it was connected with a positive commandment and prophecy, it was a demand on the simple faith of the true child of God, which is of the nature of obedience. We cannot doubt that this Divine message to Noah was the Bible of that time. It appealed to faith as the word of God. And, as in all times, with the written or spoken word there was the unwritten law, the *lex non scripta;* for we are told that "Noah did according to all that God commanded him, so did he." In this primitive dispensation notice these things:—1. The righteousness of God is the foundation. 2. The accordance of the world with God's heart, as at once commanding righteousness and hating violence, is the condition of its preservation. 3. The mercy of God is connected with his special revelations in and by the men who have found grace in his sight. 4. The provisions of redemption are embodied in an ark, which is the symbol of Divine ordinances and the associated life of believers. 5. The salvation of man is the real end and aim of all judgments. 6. With the redeemed human race there is a redeemed earth—creatures kept alive in the ark to commeuce, with the family of God, a new life. 7. While we must not push the symbology of the Flood too far, still it is impossible to overlook the figure which the Apostle Peter saw in the ark floating on the waters—the Church of Christ as washed by the Holy Ghost in those waters, which represent not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.—R.

Ver. 14.—*The way of safety.* Prediction of deluge and way of escape were alike trials of faith; beyond reach of foresight; rejected or neglected by the world. Key to the typical meaning, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. Baptism the initial seal of the Christian covenant. Text therefore sets forth salvation through Christ.

I. "Make thee an ark." Why? BECAUSE SENTENCE OF DEATH RESTS UPON ALL MEN (Rom. v. 12). As in the destruction of first-born (Exod. xi. 5). No exceptions. Covenant people saved only by the blood; so here (cf. Job ix. 30). Men, even now, are slow to believe this. Maxims of society contradict it. From childhood trained to live as if no danger, as if many things more important than salvation. And when preacher proclaims (Acts ii. 40), men listen and approve and go on as before. Yet this is the first step towards salvation, the first work of the Holy Spirit—to convince careless (Matt. xvi. 26) and well-living people that they cannot save themselves. Until this is done Christ has no attractiveness (Isa. liii. 2). Who would shut himself up in the ark if no deluge coming? Who would trust it if another way would afford safety?

II. "Make thee an ark." IT IS GOD'S APPOINTED WAY OF SAFETY. "The Lord hath made known his salvation." As surely as the deluge is according to his word, so surely is the way of deliverance (Rom. v. 20). But mark the way. Can you trust

that which seems so frail? At the root of sin lies unbelief of God's truth. This caused the fall. God says, Will you trust me? One will say, I live a good life; is not that the main thing? (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 11). Another, I pray that God would love me, and be reconciled to me. Does he not love thee? (Titus iii. 4). Is he not longing for thee? (Isa. i. 18). And is not this unbelief of what God says? Thou needest indeed to pray that the Holy Spirit should open thine eyes to what God has done. But that thy prayer may be answered there must be the will to be taught (Ps. lxxxv. 8).

III. "Make thee an ark." THE TEST OF FAITH. There is a faith which does nothing, which merely accepts a doctrine. Such was not that of Noah. His life's work was to act on what he believed. The object of our faith is Jesus Christ, the personal, living, loving Saviour; not merely the doctrine that he died and rose again. "Make thee an ark" is more than knowledge that he is the Deliverer. It is taking refuge in him, and walking in his steps.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1.—**And the Lord.** *Jehovah,* since Elohim now appears as the covenant God, though this change in the Divine name is commonly regarded by modern critics as betraying the hand of a Jehovist supplementer of the fundamental document of the Elohist (Bleek, Vaihinger, Davidson, Kalisch, Colenso, Alford); but "that the variations in the name of God furnish no criterion by which to detect different documents is evident enough from the fact that in ver. 5 Noah does as Jehovah commands him, while in ver. 16 Elohim alternates with Jehovah" (Keil). **Said unto Noah.** At the end of the 120 years, when the building of the ark had been completed, and only seven days before the Flood—doubtless by an audible voice still speaking to him from between the cherubim, which we can suppose had not yet vanished from the earth. **Come thou and all thy house into the ark.** *I. e.* prepare for entering; the actual entry taking place seven days later. So God ever hides his people before the storm bursts (cf. Isa. xxvi. 20). **For thee have I seen righteous** (*vide* ch. vi. 9) **before me.** Literally, *before my face;* not merely notifying the Divine observance of Noah's piety, but announcing the fact of his justification in God's sight. "To be righteous before God," the usual Scriptural phrase for justification (cf. Ps. cxliii. 2). **In this generation.** *Vide* ch. vi. 9. Indicating not alone the sphere of Noah's godly life, but its exceptional character; "involving an opposing sentence of condemnation against his contemporaries" (Lange).

Ver. 2.—**Of every clean beast.** That the distinction between clean and unclean animals was at this time understood is easier to believe than that the writer would perpetrate the glaring anachronism of introducing in prediluvian times what only took its rise several centuries later (Kalisch). That this distinction was founded on nature, "every tribe of mankind being able to distinguish between the sheep and the hyena, the dove and the vulture" ('Speaker's Commentary'), or "on an immediate conscious feeling of the human spirit, not yet clouded by any ungodly and unnatural culture, which leads it to see in many beasts pictures of sin and corruption" (Keil), has been supposed; but with greater probability it was of Divine institution, with reference to the necessities of sacrifice (Ainsworth, Bush, Wordsworth; cf. ch. viii. 20). To this was appended in the Levitical system a distinction between clean and unclean in respect of man's food (Levit. xi. 3). **Shalt thou take**—inconsistent with ch. vi. 20, which says the animals were to come to Noah (Colenso); but ch. vi. 19, which says that Noah was to bring them, *i. e.* make them go (at least nearly equivalent to take), clearly recognises Noah's agency (Quarry)—**to thee by sevens.** Literally, *seven, seven;* either seven *pairs* (Vulgate, LXX., Aben Ezra, Clericus, Michaelis, De Wette, Knobel, Kalisch, Murphy, Alford, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or seven individuals (Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret, Calvin, Pererius, Willet, Delitzsch, Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Bush); both parties quoting the next clause in support of their particular interpretation. Davidson, Colenso, and Kalisch challenge both interpretations as "irreconcilable with the preceding narrative" (ch. vi. 19); but the obvious answer is, that while in the first communication, which was given 120 years before, when minute instructions were not required, it is simply stated that the animals should be preserved by pairs; in the second, when the ark was finished and the animals were about to be collected, it is added that, in the case of the few clean beasts used for sacrifice, an exception should be made to the general rule, and not one pair, but either

three pairs with one over, or seven pairs, should be preserved. **The male and his female.** This seems to be most in favour of the first interpretation, that pairs, and not individuals, are meant. **And of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.** *Ish veishto.* Cf. ch. ii. 25, where the phrase denotes the ethical personality of human beings, to which there is here an approximation, as the preserved animals were designed to be the parents of subsequent races. The usual phrase for male and female, which is employed in ch. i. 28 (a so-called Elohistic) and ch. vii. 3 (a so-called Jehovistic section), refers to the physical distinction of sex in human beings.

Ver. 3.—**Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female.** *I. e.* of clean fowls, "which he leaves to be understood out of the foregoing verse" (Poole). The Samaritan, Syriac, and LXX. (not so Vulgate, Onkelos, Arabic) insert the word "clean" unnecessarily, and also add, "*καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν πετεινῶν τῶν μὴ καθαρῶν δύο δύο ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ*," manifestly to make the verse resemble the preceding. **To keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.**

Vers. 4, 5.—**For yet seven days.** Literally, *for to days yet seven*—after seven days; thus giving Noah time to complete his preparations, and the world one more opportunity to repent, which Poole thinks many may have done, though their bodies were drowned for their former impenitency. **And I will cause it to rain**—literally, *I causing it*, the participle indicating the certainty of the future action (cf. ch. vi. 17; Prov. xxv. 22; cf. Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 306)—**upon the earth forty days and forty nights.** The importance assigned in subsequent Scripture to the number forty, probably from the circumstance here recorded, is too obvious to be overlooked. Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 33). The scouts remained forty days in Canaan (Num. xiii. 26). Moses was forty days in the mount (Exod. xxiv. 18). Elijah fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness of Beersheba (1 Kings xix. 8). A respite of forty days was given to the Ninevites (Jonah iii. 4). Christ fasted forty days before the temptation (Matt. iv. 2), and sojourned forty days on earth after his resurrection (Acts i. 3). It thus appears to have been regarded as symbolical of a period of trial, ending in victory to the good and in ruin to the evil. **And every living substance**—*yekûm;* literally, standing thing, *omne quod subsistit*, i. e. "whatever is capable by a principle of life of maintaining an erect posture" (Bush); *ἀνάστημα* (LXX.; cf. Deut. xi. 6; Job xxii. 20)—**that I have made will I destroy**—literally, *blot out* (cf. ch. vi. 7)—**from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according to all that the Lord** (Jehovah, the God of salvation, who now interposed for the patriarch's safety; in ch. vi. 22, where God is exhibited in his relations to all flesh, it is Elohim) **had commanded him.**

Ver. 6.—**And Noah was six hundred years old.** Literally, *a son of six hundred years*, *i. e.* in his 600th year (cf. ver. 11). The number six "is generally a Scriptural symbol of suffering. Christ suffered on the sixth day. In the Apocalypse the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet, the sixth vial introduce critical periods of affliction" (Wordsworth). **When the flood of waters was upon the earth.**

Ver. 7.—**And Noah went in.** *I. e.* began to go in a full week before the waters came (*vide* ver. 10). "A proof of faith and a warning to the world." **And his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him.** In all eight persons (1 Pet. iii. 20); whence it is obvious that "each had but one wife, and that polygamy, as it began among the Cainites, was most probably confined to them" (Poole). **Into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.** Literally, *from the face* of the waters, being moved with fear and impelled by faith (Heb. xi. 7).

Vers. 8, 9.—**Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two into the ark, the male and the female.** In obedience to a Divine impulse. Nothing short of Divine power could have effected such a timely and orderly entrance of the creatures into the huge vessel (cf. their mode of exit, ch. viii. 18). The seeming inconsistency of this verse with ver. 2, which says that the clean animals entered the ark by sevens, will be at once removed by connecting vers. 7 and 8 instead of 8 and 9, and commencing a new sentence with ver. 9. It favours this, that "of" is awanting before "everything that creepeth," and that the LXX. begin ver. 8 with "and" (cf. Quarry, p. 373). **As God had commanded Noah.**

Ver. 10.—**And it came to pass after seven days** (literally, *at the seventh of the days*), **that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—9.—*The ark entered.* I. THE INVITATION OF JEHOVAH. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." This invitation was—1. *Timely.* It was given on the finishing of the ark, and therefore not too soon; also seven days before the Flood,

and therefore not too late. God's interventions in his people's behalf are always opportune: witness the exodus from Egypt, the deliverance at the Red Sea, the destruction of Sennacherib's army; Christ's walking on the sea, sleeping in the boat, rising from the dead. 2. *Special*. It was addressed in particular to Noah. "Come thou." "The Lord knoweth them that are his." "The Good Shepherd calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." So is the invitation of the gospel of the same personal and individual description (Matt. xiii. 9; Rev. iii. 6). Men are not summoned to believe in masses, but as individuals. 3. *Comprehensive*. "And all thy house." Whether Shem, Ham, and Japheth were at this time believers is not known. The noticeable circumstance is that the invitation was not addressed immediately to them, but mediately through their father. If Noah stood alone in his piety, their summons to enter the ark reminds us of the advantage of belonging to a pious family, and being even only externally connected with the Church (cf. Luke xix. 9; Acts xvi. 32). 4. *Gracious*. Given to Noah certainly, in one sense, because of his piety, (ch. vii. 1). But since his godliness was the fruit of faith, and his faith nothing more than a resting on the Divine covenant or promise, it was thus purely of grace. So is God's invitation in the gospel all of grace (Gal. i. 6; Ephes. iii. 8). 5. *Urgent*. Only seven days, and the Flood would begin. There was clearly not much time to lose. Only a seventh of the time given to the men of Nineveh (Jonah iii. 4). But not even seven days are promised in the gospel call (Matt. xxiv. 36; Rom. xiii. 12; Phil. iv. 5; James v. 9).

II. THE OBEDIENCE OF NOAH. "And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him." This obedience was—1. *Immediate*. It does not appear that Noah trifled with the Divine summons, or in any way interposed delay; and neither should sinful men with the invitation of the gospel (2 Cor. vi. 2; Heb. iii. 7). 2. *Believing*. It had its inspiration in a simple credence of the Divine word that safety could be secured only within the ark; and not until the soul is prepared to accord a hearty trust to the statement that Christ is the heaven-provided ark of salvation for a lost world does it yield to the gospel call, and enter into the safe shelter of his Church by believing on his name (Ephes. i. 13). 3. *Personal*. Noah himself entered in. Had he not done so, not only would his own salvation have been missed, but his efforts to induce others to seek the shelter of the ark would have been fruitless. So the first duty of a herald of the gospel or minister of salvation is to make his own calling and election sure, after which his labours in behalf of others are more likely to be efficacious (1 Cor. ix. 27; 1 Tim. iv. 16). 4. *Influential*. The entire household of the patriarch followed his example. It is doubtful if at this time any of them were possessors of his faith. Yet all of them complied with the heavenly invitation, probably impelled thereto by the example and exhortation of their parent. When the head of a household becomes a Christian he in effect brings salvation to the house. He brings all its inmates into at least a nominal connection with the Church, encircles them with an atmosphere of religion emanating from his own character and conduct, and frequently through Divine grace is honoured to be the instrument of their salvation (Luke xix. 9; Acts xi. 14; xvi. 31). 5. *Minute*. Noah's entry into the ark in all particulars corresponded with the Divine invitation. The animals went in two and two, as God commanded. Men are not expected or allowed to deviate from the plain prescriptions of the word of God concerning the way of faith and salvation (Acts x. 33).

Learn—1. The unwearied diligence of God in saving men. 2. The personal nature of God's dealings with men. 3. The extreme solicitude with which he watches over them, who are his. 4. The indispensable necessity of obedience in order to salvation.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—6.—*God the Saviour inviting faith*. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark," &c. Covenant mercy. A type of the Christian Church, with its special privilege and defence, surrounded with the saving strength of God.

I. DIVINE PREPARATION. *Providence*. The ark. 1. Human agency under inspired direction. The word of God. The institutions of religion. The fellowship of

saints. 2. A preparation made in the face of and in spite of an opposing world. The history of the Church from the beginning. 3. The preparation is safety and peace to those who trust in it, notwithstanding the outpoured judgment.

II. Divine faithfulness. "Come *thou;* for *thee* have I seen righteous." *Not* the merit of man is the ground of confidence, but the Lord's grace. I have seen thee righteous because I have looked upon thee as an obedient servant, and have counted thy faith for righteousness. Faithfulness in God is an object of man's trust as connected with his spoken word and the preparation of his mercy.

III. Divine sufficiency. The weak creatures in the ark surrounded by the destroying waters. A refuge opened in God. His blessing on the household. His redemption succouring the individual soul, the life and its treasures, family peace and prosperity, &c. The ark a type of the prepared salvation, carrying the believer through the flood of earthly cares and troubles, through the deep waters of death, to the new world of the purified heaven and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.—R.

Vers. 7—16.—*Realised salvation.* "And Noah went in," &c. "And the Lord shut him in" (vers. 7, 10, 16).

I. The contrast between the position of the believer and that of the unbeliever. The difference between a true freedom and a false. "*Shut in*" by the Lord to obedience, but also to peace and safety. The world's judgment *shut out.* The restraints and privations of a religious life only temporary. The ark will be opened hereafter.

II. The method of grace illustrated. He that opens the ark for salvation shuts in his people for the completion of his work. We cannot shut ourselves in. Our temptation to break forth into the world and be involved in its ruin. The misery of fear. Are we safe? Perseverance not dependent upon our self-made resolutions or provisions. By various means we are shut in to the spiritual life. Providentially; by ordinances; by bonds of fellowship. We should look for the Divine seal.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 11, 12.—**In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month.** Not (1) of Noah's 600th year (Knobel); but either (2) of the theocratic year, which began with Nisan or Abib (Exod. xii. 2; xiii. 4; xxiii. 15; xxxiv. 18; Deut. xvi. 1; Neh. ii. 1), either in March or April (Rabbi Joshua, Ambrose, Luther, Calvin, Mercerus, Hävernick, Kalisch, Alford, Wordsworth); or (3) of the civil year, which commenced with the autumnal equinox in the month Tisri, "called of old the first month, but now the seventh" (Chaldee Paraphrase; Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22), corresponding to September or October (Josephus, Rabbi Jonathan, Kimchi, Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy, Bush, Ainsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). In support of the former may be alleged the usual Biblical mode of reckoning the sacred year by numbers, and in defence of the latter that the ecclesiastical year did not begin till the time of the Exodus. **In the seventeenth day of the month.** "The careful statement of the chronology, which marks with such exactness day and month in the course of this occurrence, puts all suspicion of the history to shame" (Hävernick). **The same day were all the fountains of the great deep**—*i. e.* the waters of the ocean (Job xxxviii. 16, 30; xli. 31; Ps. cvi. 9) and of subterranean reservoirs (Job xxviii. 4, 10; Ps. xxxiii. 7; Deut. viii. 7)—**broken up.** "By a metynomy, because the earth and other obstructions were broken up, and so a passage opened for the fountains" (Poole). "The niphal or passive form of בָּקַע denotes violent changes in the depths of the sea, or in the action of the earth—at all events in the atmosphere" (Lange). **And the windows of heaven were opened.** *Arubboth,* from *arabh,* to twine—network or lattices; hence a window, as being closed with lattice-work instead of glass (Eccles. xii. 3); here the flood-gates of heaven, which are opened when it rains (cf. ch. viii. 2; 2 Kings vii. 19; Isa. xxiv. 18; Mal. iii. 10). **And the rain was**—literally, *and there was* (happened, came) *violent rain;* גֶּשֶׁם, different from מָטָר, which denotes any rain, and is applied to other things which God pours down from heaven (Exod. ix. 18; xvi. 4)—**upon the earth forty days and forty nights** (cf. ch. vii. 4). Though the language is metaphorical and optical, it clearly points to a change in the land level by which the ocean waters overflowed the

depressed continent, accompanied with heavy and continuous rain, as the cause of the Deluge (contrast with this the works of the third and fourth creative days); yet "the exact statement of the natural causes that concurred in the Deluge is a circumstance which certainly in no wise removes the miraculous nature of the whole fact—who has unveiled the mysteries of nature?—but which certainly shows how exact was the attention paid to the external phenomena of the Deluge" (Hävernick).

Vers. 13, 14.—**In the selfsame day**—literally, *in the bone*, or *strength*, or *essence* (ch. ii. 23) *of that day*—in that very day (cf. ch. xvii. 23, 26); "about noonday, *i. e.* in the public view of the world" (Poole); "a phrase intended to convey the idea of the utmost precision of time" (Bush)—**entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the wives of his three sons with them, into the ark.** Not inconsistent with vers. 4, 5, which do not necessarily imply that the actual entry was made seven days before the Flood; but merely that Noah then began to carry out the Divine instructions. The threefold recital of the entry—first in connection with the invitation or command (ver. 5), and again in the actual process during the seven days (ver. 7), and finally on the day when the Flood began (ver. 15),—besides lending emphasis to the narrative, heightens its dramatic effect. **They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort** (literally, *wing*). The creatures here specified correspond with the enumeration—viz., chayyah, behemah, remes—in ch. i. 25, *q. v.* The last clause, *kol-canaph*, Kalisch, following Clericus, translates, though, according to Rosenmüller, without satisfactory reasons, "every winged creature," and so makes "three classes of winged beings—the eatable species (עוף), the birds which people the air and enliven it by the sounds of their melodies (צִפּוֹר), and the endless swarms of insects (כָּנָף), the greatest part of which possess neither the utility of the former nor the beauty of the latter." Gesenius, however, translates it "birds of all kinds," and Knobel regards it as synonymous with "every bird." The LXX. give the sense of the two clauses: *καὶ πᾶν ὄρνεον πετεινὸν κατὰ γένος αὐτοῦ.*

Ver. 15.—**And they went in unto Noah into the ark** (cf. ch. vi. 20, which affirmed they should come), **two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.** Cf. the three expressions for an animated creature—חַיָּה נֶפֶשׁ (ch. i. 30), יְקוּם (ch. vii. 4), רוּחַ חַיִּים אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ.

Ver. 16.—**And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God** (Elohim) **had commanded him.** This evidently closed an Elohistic passage, according to Colenso, as the ensuing clause as manifestly belongs to the Jehovistic interpolator; but the close connection subsisting between the two clauses forbids any such dislocation of the narrative as that suggested. "On the supposition of an independent Jehovistic narrative, Bishop Colenso feels it necessary to interpolate before the next statement the words, 'And Noah and all his house went into the ark'" (Quarry, p. 379). **And the Lord** (Jehovah) **shut him in.** Literally, *shut behind him*, i. e. closed up the door of the ark after him (*ἔκλεισε τὴν κιβωτὸν ἔξωθεν αὐτοῦ*, LXX.); doubtless miraculously, to preserve him both from the violence of the waters and the rage of men. The contrast between the two names of the Deity is here most vividly presented. It is Elohim who commands him about the beasts; it is Jehovah, the covenant God, who insures his safety by closing the ark behind him.

Vers. 17—19.—**And the flood was forty days upon the earth.** Referring to the forty days' and nights' rain of ver. 4 (*τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας καὶ τεσσαράκοντα νύκτας*, LXX.), during which the augmentation of the waters is described in a threefold degree. **And the waters increased.** Literally, *grew great*. The *first degree* of increase, marked by the *floating* of the ark. **And bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.** Literally, *it was high from upon the earth*, i. e. it rose above it. **And the waters prevailed.** Literally, *were strong;* from גָּבַר, to be strong; whence the Gibborim of ch. vi. 4. **And were increased greatly on the earth.** Literally, *became great, greatly*. The *second degree* of increase, marked by the *going* of the ark. **And the ark went**—*i. e.* floated along; *καὶ ἐπεφέρετο*, LXX. (Ps. civ. 26)—**upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly.** Literally, *and the waters became strong, exceedingly*. The *third degree* of increase, marked by the *submergence* of the mountains. **And all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.** A clear assertion of the universality of the Flood (Keil, Kalisch, Alford, Bush, Wordsworth); but the language does not necessarily imply more than that all the high hills beneath the spectator's heaven were submerged (cf. ch. xli. 57; Exod. ix. 25; x. 15; Deut. ii. 25; 1 Kings x. 24; Acts ii. 5; Col. i. 25, for instances in which the universal terms *all* and *every* must be taken with a limited signification); while it is almost certain that, had the narrator even designed to record only the fact that all the heights within the visible horizon had disappeared beneath the

rising waters, he would have done so by saying that "all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered." While, then, it is admitted that the words may depict a complete submergence of the globe, it is maintained by many competent scholars that the necessities of exegesis only demand a partial inundation (Poole, Murphy, Tayler Lewis, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis).

Ver. 20.—**Fifteen cubits upward**—half the height of the ark—**did the waters prevail.** Literally, *become strong;* above the highest mountains obviously, and not above the ground simply; as, on the latter alternative, it could scarcely have been added, **and the mountains were covered.**

Vers. 21, 22 describe the effect of the Deluge in its destruction of all animal and human life. **And all flesh died that moved upon the earth.** A general expression for the animal creation, of which the particulars are then specified. **Both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth.** Literally, *in* fowl, and in cattle, &c. (cf. ver. 14). **And every man.** *I. e.* all the human race (with the exception of the inmates of the ark), which is further characterised as **all in whose nostrils was the breath of life.** Literally, *the breath of the spirit of lives,* *i. e.* all mankind. A clear pointing backwards to ch. ii. 7, which leads Davidson to ascribe vers. 22, 23 to the Jehovist, although Eichhorn, Tuch, Bleek, Vaihinger, and others leave them in the fundamental document, but which is rather to be regarded as a proof of the internal unity of the book. **Of all that** was **in the dry** land,—a further specification of the creatures that perished in the Flood,—**died.** It is obvious the construction of vers. 21, 22 may be differently understood. Each verse may be taken as a separate sentence, as in the A. V., or the second sentence may commence with the words, "And every man," as in the present exposition. Thus far the calamity is simply viewed in its objective result. In the words which follow, which wear the aspect of an unnecessary repetition, it is regarded in its relation to the Divine threatening.

Ver. 23.—**And every living substance was destroyed**—literally, *wiped out* (cf. ch. vi. 7; vii. 4)—**which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and**—literally, *from man unto*—**cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed**—wiped out by washing (cf. ch. vi. 7)—**from the earth: and Noah only remained** alive, **and they that** were **with him in the ark.** The straits to which the advocates of the documentary hypothesis are sometimes reduced are remarkably exemplified by the fortunes of these verses (21—23) in the attempt to assign them to their respective authors. Astruc conjectures that ver. 21 was taken from what he calls monumentum B, ver. 22 from "monument" A, and ver. 23 from monument C. Eichhorn ascribes vers. 21, 22 to an Elohistic author, and ver. 23 to a Jehovistic. Ilgen assigns vers. 21, 22 to the first, and ver. 23 to the second Elohist. Bleek, all three to the Elohist; and Davidson ver. 21 to the Elohist, vers. 22, 23 to the Jehovist. Amid such uncertainty it will be reasonable to cling to the belief that Moses wrote all the three verses, at least till the higher criticism knows its own mind.

Ver. 24.—**And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.** Additional to the forty days of rain (Murphy), making 190 since the commencement of the Flood; or more probably inclusive of the forty days (Knobel, Lange, Bush, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Comment.,' Inglis), which, reckoning thirty days to the month, would bring the landing of the ark to the seventeenth day of the seventh month, as stated in ch. viii. 4.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 19.—*Was the Flood universal?* I. THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT. Unquestionably the language of the historian appears to describe a complete submergence of the globe beneath a flood of waters, and is capable of being so understood, so far as exegesis can determine. Unquestionably also that this was the writer's meaning would never have been challenged had it not been for certain difficulties of a scientific nature, as well as of other kinds, which were gradually seen to attach to such hypothesis. But these difficulties having arisen in men's minds led to a closer and more careful investigation of the Scripture narrative, when it was found—1. That the language of the historian did not necessarily imply that the catastrophe described was of universal extent (*vide* Exposition). 2. That, if it had been only partial and local in its operation, in all probability the same, or at least closely similar, terms would have been selected to depict its appearance, as observed by a spectator. 3. That the purpose for which, according to the inspired record, the Deluge was sent could have been completely effected without the submergence of the entire globe—that purpose being the destruction of the human race, which, it is believed, had not

at that time overspread the earth, but was confined to a limited region contiguous to the valley of the Euphrates. That this last conjecture is not of recent origin, but was early entertained by theologians, is proved by the facts that Aben Ezra "confuteth the opinion of some who in his days held the Deluge not to have been universal" (Willet); that Bishop Patrick notes (ch. vii. 19) that "there were those anciently, and they have their successors now, who imagined the Flood was not universal,—ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ οἱ τότε ἄνθρωποι ᾤκουν,—but only there where men then dwelt;" that Matt. Poole writes, "Peradventure this Flood might not be universal over the whole earth, but only over all the habitable world, where either men or beasts lived, which was as much as either the meritorious cause of the Flood, men's sins, or the end of it, the destruction of all men and beasts, required" (Synopsis, ch. vii. 19); and that Bishop Stillingfleet in his 'Origines Sacræ' remarks, "I cannot see any necessity, from the Scriptures, to assert that the Flood did spread itself over all the surface of the earth. That all mankind (those in the ark excepted) were destroyed by it is most certain, according to the Scriptures; but from thence follows no necessity at all of asserting the universality of it as to the globe of the earth, unless it be sufficiently proved that the earth was peopled before the Flood, which I despair of ever seeing proved" (*vide* 'Quarry on Genesis,' p. 184). This opinion, it is almost needless to observe, has been adopted by the majority of modern scholars. 4. That subsequent Scriptural references to this primeval catastrophe are at least not decidedly at variance with the notion of a limited Deluge. Gen. ix. 15 places emphasis on the fact that the waters will no more become a flood to destroy *all flesh*, i. e. all mankind. Isa. liv. 9, pointing back to Gen. ix. 15, says that as God swore in the days of Noah that the earth would be no more inundated as to carry off the entire population, so did he swear then that he would not rebuke Israel. The language does not, as Wordsworth thinks, imply the universality of the Deluge. 2 Pet. ii. 5; iii. 6 refers to the destruction of the ἀρχαῖος κόσμος, *i. e.* the world of men, the κόσμος ἀσεβῶν specially mentioned in the former of these passages. So far then as Scripture is concerned we are not shut up to the necessity of regarding the Deluge as universal.

II. SCIENTIFIC DIFFICULTIES. 1. *Astronomical.* It is urged that, as there is no sufficient evidence of any general subsidence of the earth's crust, the theory proposed by some harmonists, that the land and water virtually exchanged places (this was supposed to be borne out by the existence of shells and corals at the top of high mountains), having now been completely abandoned (that the outlines of the great continental seas have been substantially the same from the beginning—*vide* ch. i. ver. 9, Expos.), the entire surface of the globe could be covered only by a large increase of water being added to the earth's mass. Kalisch supposes eight times the aggregate of water contained in all the seas and oceans of the earth; that this must have produced such a shock to the solar system as to have caused a very considerable aberration in the earth's orbit, of which, however, no trace can be detected; and that, consequently, it is unphilosophical to imagine that such a disturbance of the entire stellar world as would necessarily follow on that event would be resorted to in order to destroy a race of sinful beings in one of the smallest planets of the system. But—(1) Biblical science, which recognises an incarnation of the Word of God in order to save man, will always hesitate to pronounce anything too great for the Almighty to permit or do in connection with man. (2) It is gratuitous to infer that because a general subsidence of the earth's crust cannot now be traced, there was none. Absence of evidence that a thing was is not equivalent to presence of proof that a thing was not. Witness the third day's vegetation and antediluvian civilisation. (3) If even the earth's surface were covered with water, it is doubtful if it would be much more in effect than the breaking out of a profuse sweat upon the human body, or the filling up with water of the indentures on the rough skin of an orange, in which case it is more than probable that the apprehended disturbance of the solar system would prove in great part imaginary. 2. *Geological.* At one time believed to afford incontestable evidence of a universal deluge in the drift formations, the diluvium of the earlier geologists (of late, with better reason, ascribed to the influence of a glacial period which prevailed over the greater part of Central and Northern Europe in prehistoric times), geological

science is now held to teach exactly the opposite. The extinct volcanoes of Languedoc and Auvergne are believed to have been in operation long anterior to the time of man's appearance on the earth, the remains of extinct animals being found among their scoriæ; and yet the lava cones are in many instances as perfect as when first thrown up, while the dross lies loose upon their sides, which it is scarcely supposable would be the case had they been subjected to any cataclysmal immersion such as is presupposed in the Deluge. But here the mistake is that of imagining the Noachic Flood to have been of any such violent torrential character. On the contrary, the Scripture narrative represents the waters as having risen and subsided slowly, and the whole phenomenon to have been of such a kind as, while destroying human life, to effect comparatively little change upon the face of nature; and, besides, careful scientific observers have declared that the volcanic scoriæ in question is not so loose as is sometimes alleged (Smith's 'Bib. Dict.,' art. Noah). 3. *Zoological.* This refers to the difficulty of accommodating all the animals that were then alive. So long of course as Raleigh's computation of eighty-nine distinct species of animals was accepted as correct, the task imposed upon apologists was not of a very formidable character. But of mammalia alone there are now known to exist 1658 different species, thus making about 4000 and upwards of individuals (the clean beasts being taken in sevens or seven pairs) that required to be stalled in the ark; and when to these are added the pairs of the 6000 birds, 650 reptiles, and 550,000 insects that are now recognised by zoologists, the difficulty is seen to be immensely increased. An obvious remark, however, in connection with this is that there is a tendency among modern zoologists unnecessarily to multiply the number of species. But in truth a prior difficulty relates to the collection of these multitudinous creatures from their respective habitats. If the entire surface of the globe was submerged, then must the fauna belonging to the different continents have been conveyed across the seas and lands towards the ark, and reconducted thence again to their appropriate settlements in some way not described and impossible to imagine; whereas if the inundated region extended (through the subsidence of the earth's crust) to the Mediterranean on the west, and the Indian Ocean on the south and east, it is apparent that neither would this difficulty have proved insuperable, nor would the collection of the animals have been rendered unnecessary, the devastated country being so wide that only by preservation of the species could it have been speedily replenished.

III. The CONCLUSION, therefore, seems to be that, while Scripture does not imperatively forbid the idea of a partial Deluge, science appears to require it, and, without ascribing to all the scientific objections that are urged against the universality of the Flood that importance which their authors assign to them, it may be safely affirmed that there is considerable reason for believing that the *mabbul* which swept away the antediluvian men was confined to the region which they inhabited.

Ver. 23.—*The Deluge.* I. A STRIKING TESTIMONY TO THE DIVINE FAITHFULNESS. 1. *In respect of threatenings against the wicked.* Whether the faith of Noah ever betrayed symptoms of wavering during the long interval of waiting for the coming of the Flood it is impossible to say; it can scarcely be doubted that the men who for six score years had seen the sun rise and set with unwearied regularity, that had watched the steady and continuous movement of nature's laws and forces throughout the passing century, oftentimes exclaimed, "Where is the promise of his coming, for all things continue as they were from the beginning?" And yet God kept his word, and fulfilled his threatening. "The flood came, and took them all away" (Matt. xxiv. 39). Cf. the Divine threatenings against Babylon (Jer. li. 33), against Tyre (Isa. xxiii. 12), against Jerusalem (2 Kings xxi. 13; Jer. xxvi. 18), against the Jews (Deut. xxviii. 49). Let impenitent sinners thereby be reminded that there is one more word of doom which he will yet cause to come to pass (Ps. ix. 17; 2 Thess. i. 8; 2 Pet. iii. 10). 2. *In respect of promises to the saints.* At the same time that he foretold to Noah the destruction of his licentious and violent contemporaries, he distinctly promised that he would establish his covenant with Noah, and preserve both him and his amid the general overthrow. And that too he implemented in due time and to the letter. Let the saints then learn to trust the precious promises of God

(2 Pet. i. 4) which have been given to enable them to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust (τῆς ἐν κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς, *i. e.* the destruction that is already operating in the world and coming out of, as it is carried in, the world's lust).

II. A signal display of the Divine power. 1. *In controlling his creatures.* (1) *In collecting the animals*, which he did, doubtless, by making use of their instincts which led them to apprehend the coming danger. *Vide* Job xxxix.—xli. for God's power over the animal creation. (2) *In using the powers of nature*—breaking up the flood-gates of the deep, and opening the windows of heaven. The phenomenon was distinctly miraculous; but if God made the world, causing it to stand together out of the water and through the water, the supernatural character of the Deluge should not occasion difficulty. Nor should the power of God be overlooked in the ordinary phenomena of nature. "Nature is but another name for an effect whose cause is God." In the miracle God reveals what he is always silently and imperceptibly doing in the natural event. Nothing happens in the realm of providence without the concurrence of Almighty power (Amos iii. 6; Matt. x. 29). Let God's power exhibited over nature's forces remind us of his ability to bring the present terrestrial economy to an end as he has promised (2 Pet. iii. 10, 11). (3) *In destroying the lives of men.* In every case life is a gift of God, and can only be recalled by him (Deut. xxxii. 39; 2 Sam. ii. 6). Yet, unless when God interposes to destroy on a large scale,—*e. g.* by famine, pestilence, war, accident,—his absolute and unchallengeable control over men's lives (Ps. xxxi. 15) is apt to be forgotten. And with what infinite ease he can depopulate the fairest and most crowded regions he has often shown; witness, in addition to the Flood, the destruction of the cities of the plain (ch. xix. 24, 25), of the first-born in Egypt (Exod. xii. 29), of the army of Pharaoh (Exod. xiv. 27), of the host of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 35). 2. *In punishing his enemies.* That appalling visitation is fitted to remind us that God is able to execute vengeance—(1) *On the greatest sinners.* Having cast down the sinning angels, and drowned the world of the ungodly, and burnt up the filthy Sodomites, it is scarcely likely that any criminal will be beyond his power to apprehend and chastise (2 Pet. ii. 9; Jude 15). (2) *In the severest forms.* Having all the resources of nature at his command,—the gleaming thunderbolt, the sweeping flood, the sleeping volcano, the tempestuous hurricane, all the several and combined potencies of fire, air, earth, and water,—he can never want a weapon wherewith to inflict upon his adversaries "the tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish," he has decreed for their portion (Rom. ii. 8, 9; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Rev. xx. 15; xxi. 8). (3) *At the most unexpected times.* Few things connected with the Noachic Deluge are more impressive and paralysing to the mind than the suddenness of the surprisal with which it sprang upon the wicked generation that for 120 years had been disbelieving its reality and ridiculing the warnings of the patriarch. "So also shall the coming of the Son of man be." (4) *With the most inevitable certainty.* Tempted by their long lives to imagine that the penalty of death was cancelled or had become inoperative, or at least would not really be put in force against them, these men of the first age were recalled from their delusive reasonings. The Deluge was God's proclamation that the penalty was still in force against sinners, God's explanation of what that penalty meant, God's certification that that penalty was sure. 3. *In protecting his people.* The ark floating on the waters was a visible sermon to all time coming of God's ability to save them who believe and obey him. And, like the shelter enjoyed by Noah, the salvation which God bestows upon his people is (1) *gracious*—flowing from the Divine mercy; (2) *free*—with no condition attached except that men shall, like Noah, believe and obey; (3) *adequate*—containing all that is required for their spiritual necessities, as the ark held abundant provision for the voyage; (4) *secure*—"the Lord shut him in." So says Christ, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John x. 28).

III. A solemn attestation of the Divine holiness. Proclaiming—1. *That the Divine character was holy.* A deity who is himself subject to imperfection is inconceivable. But sinful men are prone to forget that God is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity. In this last age of the world God has discovered that to men by

sending forth an image or likeness of himself in the person of his Son, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (cf. John xiv. 9). In the first age he announced the same great truth by the water-flood. 2. *That the Divine law was holy.* That, besides being himself personally pure, he requires sinless obedience at the hands of his creatures, the Almighty has in every separate era or epoch of human history taken pains to inform men; in Edenic times by the forbidden tree; in antediluvian by the Deluge; in Mosaic by Mount Sinai; in Christian by the cross of Calvary. 3. *That the Divine government was holy.* That from the first the world has been governed in the interests of holiness is unmistakably the doctrine of Scripture. If any in Noah's time believed either that God was indifferent to righteousness, or that it was possible for "the throne of iniquity to have fellowship" with him, they must have been terribly undeceived when the crack of doom was heard above their heads. So will it be when the righteous Judge reveals himself a second time in flaming fire to render unto every man according to his deeds.

Lessons:—1. "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. vi. 18). 2. "There is nothing too hard for the Lord" (Gen. xviii. 14). 3. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 16.—*The believer's safety.* Parable of the ten virgins speaks of a final separation. "The door was shut." There our thoughts are turned to those without; here, to those within. The time was come when the choice must be made. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." The broad and narrow way. The confinement of the ark or the freedom of home; and, in view of the flood, the frail vessel or the mountains. Trust in Christ or trust in self (cf. Rom. x. 3). He chose the way of faith. God shut him in (cf. Isa. xxvi. 3). He knew he was safe. The world saw no good in it. The pause of seven days (ver. 10) illustrates the present state. Believers rejoicing in their safety; the world unconvinced of danger.

I. Christ offers safety to all. The ark was prepared that all might be saved. The condemnation was because they did not care (John iii. 19). There was room and welcome for all who would come (cf. Luke xiv. 22). Noah did not preach impossible things. When Jericho was destroyed Rahab was saved. When Sodom, Lot. God bids all seek and find refuge in Christ (Rom. iii. 22).

II. Christ is a refuge from the conviction of sin. How many are living without serious concern. Not rejecting the gospel; they hear it, and approve, and think that all is well. Like St. Paul, "alive without the law." God's commandments not understood; his holiness not known. Let such a one be led to see how God's law reaches to the springs of life and feeling, and to feel the working of the "law of sin" in his members; then what a flood. "Who will show us any good?" Good deeds cannot give peace. Worldly good as wormwood. Conscience repeats, He has been knocking, and I have not opened (Prov. i. 26). Yet, hark! his voice again: "Come unto me." It is not too late. Even now, if thou wilt, the Lord will shut thee in.

III. The safety of those who believe, whom God shuts in. Who shall lay anything to their charge? Who shall condemn? Who shall separate? (Rom. viii. 33—35). The flood is without. Noah is weak and helpless as the world. His safety is God's refuge. The Christian is surrounded by evil influences, messengers of Satan. Temptations to worldliness or to spiritual pride; cares and anxieties hindering prayer; suggestions of unbelief, and hard thoughts of God; the fainting of nature because so little progress made. But in Christ is safety. Coming to him daily as we are; with weak faith, with many perplexities, with the marks of many falls. His word is, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." In the trials of life "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1.—**And God.** *Elohim*, i. e. God in his most universal relation to his creatures. The supposition of two different accounts or histories being intermingled in the narrative of the Flood (Bleek, Eichhorn, Hupfeld, Kalisch, Alford, Colenso) is not required for a sufficient explanation of the varying use of the Divine names. **Remembered.** From a root signifying to prick, pierce, or print, *e. g.*, upon the memory; hence to remember. "Not that there is oblivion or forgetfulness with God, but then God is said to remember when he showeth by the effects that he hath taken care of man" (Willet). He remembers man's sins when he punishes them (Ps. xxv. 7; cf. 1 Kings xvii. 20), and his people's needs when he supplies them (cf. Neh. v. 19). The expression is an anthropopathism designed to indicate the Divine compassion as well as grace. Calvin thinks the remembrance of which Moses speaks "ought to be referred not only to the external aspect of things (*i. e.* the coming deliverance), but also to the inward feeling of the holy man," who, through grace, was privileged to enjoy "some sensible experience of the Divine presence" while immured in the ark. **Noah,** —cf. the Divine remembrance of Abraham and Lot (ch. xix. 29), the request of the Hebrew psalmist (Ps. cxxxii. 1)—**and every living thing,**—chayyah, or wild beast (*vide* ch. i. 25; vii. 14)—**and all the cattle that was with him in the ark.** A touching indication of the tenderness of God towards his creatures (cf. Deut. xxv. 4; Ps. xxxvi. 6; cxlv. 9, 15, 16; Jonah iv. 11). As a proof that God remembered the lonely inmates of the ark, he at once takes steps to accomplish their deliverance, which steps are next enumerated. **And God made a wind**—*ruach*. Not the Holy Ghost, as in ch. i. 2 (Theodoret, Ambrose, LXX.—*πνεῦμα*), nor the heat of the sun (Rupertus); but a current of air (*ἄνεμος*), which "would promote evaporation and aid the retreat of the waters" (Murphy):—the ordinary method of driving away rain and drying the ground (*vide* Prov. xxv. 23); the special instrumentality employed to divide the waters of the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 21)—**to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged,** or *began to grow calm*, after a period of commotion (cf. Esther ii. 1; vii. 10)—the first stage in the returning of the waters. *Καὶ ἐκόπασε τὸ ὕδωρ*, and the water grew tried (LXX.). Cf. *ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος*, Matt. xiv. 32; Mark iv. 39; vi. 51.

Ver. 2.—**The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped.** וַיִּסָּכְרוּ, from סָכַר = סָגַר, to surround, to enclose; literally, *were shut up; ἐπεκαλύφθησαν* (LXX.). Their opening was described in ch. vii. 11. **And the rain from heaven was restrained.** וַיִּכָּלֵא, literally, *was shut up*, from כָּלָא, to close. Cf. *κλείω, κωλύω, κολούω, celo, occulo* (Gesenius, Fürst), *συνεσχέθη* (LXX.). At the end of the forty days (ch. vii. 12; Augustine, Willet); at the end of the 150 days (Aben Ezra, Murphy).

Ver. 3.—**And the waters returned from off the earth continually.** Literally, *going and returning*. "More and more" (Gesenius). The first verb expresses the continuance and self-increasing state of the action involved in the second; cf. ch. xxvi. 13; 1 Sam. vi. 12; 2 Kings ii. 11 (Fürst). Gradually (Murphy, Ewald). The expression "denotes the turning-point after the waters had become calm" (T. Lewis). May it not be an attempt to represent the undulatory motion of the waves in an ebbing tide, in which the water seems first to advance, but only to retire with greater vehemence, reversing the movement of a flowing tide, in which it first retires and then advances—in the one case returning to go, in the other going to return? The LXX., as usual, indicates the visible effect rather than the actual phenomenon: *καὶ ἐνεδίδου τὸ ὕδωρ πορευόμενον ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς*. **And after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.** Literally, *were cut off*, hence diminished; *imminutæ sunt* (Vulgate); *ἠλαττονοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ* (LXX.). The first stage was the quieting of the waters; the second was the commencement of an ebbing or backward motion; the third was a perceptible diminution of the waters.

Ver. 4.—**And the ark rested.** Not stopped sailing or floating, got becalmed, and remained suspended over (Kitto's 'Cyclop.,' art. Ararat), but actually grounded and settled on (Tayler Lewis) the place indicated by עַל (cf. ver. 9; also Exod. x. 14; Numb. x. 36; xi. 25, 26; Isa. xi. 2). **In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month.** *I. e.* exactly 150 days from the commencement of the forty days' rain, reckoning thirty days to a month, which seems to confirm the opinion expressed (ch. vii. 24) that the forty days were included in the 150. Supposing the Flood to have begun in Marchesvan, the second month of the civil year (about the beginning of November), "we have then the remarkable coincidences that on the 17th day of Abib

(about the beginning of April) the ark rested on Mount Ararat, the Israelites passed over the Red Sea, and our Lord rose again from the dead" ('Speaker's Commentary'). **Upon the mountains.** *I. e.* one of the mountains. "Pluralis numerus pro singulari ponitur" (cf. ch. xxi. 7; xlvi. 7; Judges xii. 7; *vide* Glass., 'Philol. Sacr. Tract.,' i. cap. xiv. p. 866). **Of Ararat.** 1. It is agreed by all that the term *Ararat* describes a region. 2. This region has been supposed to be the island of Ceylon (Samaritan), Aryâvarta, the sacred land to the north of India (Von Bohlen, arguing from Gen. xi. 2); but "it is evident that these and such like theories have been framed in forgetfulness of what the Bible has recorded respecting the locality" (Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Ararat). 3. The locality which appears to have the countenance of Scripture is the region of Armenia (cf. 2 Kings xix. 37; Isa. xxxvii. 38; Jeremiah li. 27; Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Vulgate). 4. In Armenia three different mountains have been selected as the site on which the ark grounded. (1) The modern Ararat, which rises in Northern Armenia, about twelve miles south of Erivan, in the form of two majestic cones, the one 16,254, and the other 12,284 feet (Parisian) in height above the level of the sea (Hieronymus, Fürst, Kalisch, Keil, Delitzsch, and Lange). All but universal tradition has decided that the loftiest of these two peaks (called Macis in Armenian; Aghri-Dagh, *i. e.* the difficult or steep mountain, by the Turks; Kuchi Nuch, *i. e.* the mountain of Noah, by the Persians) was the spot where the sacred vessel first felt the solid land. Travellers describe the appearance of this amazing elevation as of incomparable and overpowering splendour. "It appeared as if the highest mountains in the world had been piled upon each other to form this one sublime immensity of earth and rocks and snow. The icy peaks of its double head rose majestically into the clear and cloudless heavens; the sun blazed bright upon them, and the reflection sent forth a radiance equal to other suns" (Ker Porter's 'Travels,' i. 132; ii. 636). "Nothing can be more beautiful than its shape, more awful than its height. All the surrounding mountains sink into insignificance when compared to it. It is perfect in all its parts; no hard, rugged feature, no unnatural prominences; everything is in harmony, and all combines to render it one of the sublimest objects in nature" (Morier's 'Journey,' i. 16; ii. 312, 345). The ascent of the Kara Dagh, or Greater Ararat, which the Armenians believe to be guarded by angels from the profane foot of man, after two unsuccessful attempts, was accomplished in 1829 by Professor Parrot, a German, and five years later, in 1834, by the Russian traveller Automonoff. In 1856 five English travellers, Majors Stewart and Frazer, Rev. Walter Thursby, Messrs. Theobald and Evans, performed the herculean task. The latest successful attempt was that of Prof. Bryce of Oxford in 1876 (*vide* 'Transcaucasia and Ararat:' London: Macmillan and Co., 1877). (2) An unknown mountain in Central Armenia between the Araxes and lakes Van and Urumiah (Vulgate, *super montes Armeniæ;* Gesenius, Murphy, Wordsworth, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary'). (3) A peak in the Gordyæan mountains, or Carduchian range, separating Armenia on the south from Kurdistan (Chaldee Paraphrase, Onkelos, Syriac, Calvin), near which is a town called Naxuana, the city of Noah (Ptolemy), Idshenan (Moses Chorenensis), and Nachidshenan, the first place of descent (the Armenians), which Josephus translates by *ἀποβατήριον*, or the place of descent. Against the first is the inaccessible height of the mountain; in favour of the third is the proximity of the region to the starting-place of the ark.

Ver. 5.—**And the waters decreased continually**—literally, *were going and decreasing*—**until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month,**—*chodesh*, a lunar month, beginning at the new moon, from *châdâsh*, to be new; *νεομηνία*, LXX. (cf. Exod. xiii. 5). *Chodesh yâmim*, the period of a month (cf. ch. xxix. 14; Num. xi. 20, 21)—**were the tops of the mountains seen.** "Became distinctly visible" (Tayler Lewis, who thinks they may have previously projected above the waters). *Apparuerunt cacumina montium* (Vulgate). The waters had now been subsiding ten weeks, and as the height of the water above the highest hills was probably determined by the draught of the ark, we may naturally reason that the subsidence which had taken place since the seventeenth day of the seventh month was not less than three hundred and fifteen inches, at twenty-one inches to the cubit, or about four and one-third inches a day.

Vers. 6, 7.—**And it came to pass**—literally, *it was*—**at the end of forty days.** Delaying through combined fear and sorrow on account of the Divine judgment (Calvin); to allow sufficient space to undo the effect of the forty days' rain (Murphy); probably just to be assured that the Deluge would not return. **That Noah opened the window**—*chalôn*, a window, "so called from being perforated, from *chalal*, to bore or pierce" (Gesenius); used of the window of Rahab's house (Josh. ii. 18); not the window (*tsôhar*) of ch. vi. 16, *q. v.*—**of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven.** Literally, *the orev*, "so called from its black colour" (Gesenius; cf. Cant. v. 11), Latin, *corvus*, a raven or crow; the article being used either (1) because the species of bird is

intended to be indicated (Kalisch), or (2) because there was only one male raven in the ark, the raven being among the unclean birds (Levit. xi. 15; Deut. xiv. 14; Lange); but against this is "the dove" (ver. 8); or (3) because it had come to be well known from this particular circumstance (Keil). Its peculiar fitness for the mission imposed on it lay in its being a bird of prey, and therefore able to sustain itself by feeding on carrion (Prov. xxx. 17). To the incident here recorded is doubtless to be traced the prophetic character which in the ancient heathen world, and among the Arabians in particular, was supposed to attach to this ominous bird. **Which went to and fro.** Literally, *and it went forth going and returning*, i. e. flying backwards and forwards, from the ark and to the ark, perhaps resting on it, but not entering into it (Calvin, Willet, Ainsworth, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary'); though some have conceived that it no more returned to the ark, but kept flying to and fro throughout the earth (LXX., "καὶ ἐξελθὼν οὐκ ἀνέστρεψεν;" Vulgate, "qui egrediebatur et non revertebatur;" Alford, "it is hardly probable that it returned;" Murphy, "it did not need to return"). **Until the waters were dried up from off the earth.** When of course its return was unnecessary. Cf. for a similar form of expression 2 Sam. vi. 23. Whether it entirely disappeared at the first, or continued hovering round the ark, Noah was unable from its movements to arrive at any certain conclusion as to the condition of the earth, and accordingly required to adopt another expedient, which he did in the mission of the dove.

Vers. 8, 9.—**Also he sent forth**—ver. 10 seems to warrant the inference that this was after an interval of seven days (Baumgarten, Knobel, Keil, Lange)—**a dove.** Literally, *the* dove. The Scriptural references to the dove are very numerous: cf. Ps. lxviii. 14 (its beautiful plumage); Levit. v. 7; xii. 6 (its sacrificial use); Isa. xxxviii. 14; lix. 11 (its plaintive notes); Ps. lv. 6 (its power of flight); Matt. x. 16 (its gentleness); *vide* also the metaphorical usage of the term in Cant. i. 15; v. 12 (beautiful eyes); Cant. v. 2; vi. 9 (a term of endearment). **From him.** *I. e.* from himself, from the ark; not ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ (LXX.), *post eum* (Vulgate); *i. e.* after the raven. Lange thinks the expression indicates that the gentle creature had to be driven from its shelter out upon the wide waste of water. **To see if the waters were abated**—literally, *lightened*, i. e. decreased (ver. 11)—**from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot.** The earth being not yet dry, but wet and muddy, and doves delighting to settle only on such places as are dry and clean; or the mountain tops, though visible, being either too distant or too high, and doves delighting in valleys and level plains, whence they are called *doves of the valleys* (Ezek. vii. 16). **And she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were upon** (literally, *waters upon;* a much more graphic statement than appears in the A. V.) **the face of the whole earth: then** (literally, *and*) **he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in** (literally, *caused her to come in*) **unto him into the ark.**

Ver. 10.—**And he stayed.** וַיָּחֶל, fut. apoc., Hif. of חוּל, to turn, to twist, to be afraid, to tremble, to wait (Fürst); fut. apoc. Kal (Gesenius). **Yet other seven days.** עוֹד, prop. the inf. absol. of the verb עוּד, to go over again, to repeat; hence, as an adverb, conveying the idea of doing over again the action expressed in the verb (cf. ch. xlvi. 29; Ps. lxxxiv. 5). **And again he sent forth**—literally, *he added to send* (cf. vers. 12, 21)—**the dove out of the ark.**

Ver. 11.—**And the dove came in unto him.** Literally, *to him.* As the manner of doves is, partly for better accommodation both for food and lodging than yet he could meet with abroad, and partly from love to his mate (Poole). **In the evening** (of the seventh day). **And, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off.** Not as if "Deo jubente, uno die germinavit terra" (Ambrose), but because the olive leaves kept green under water (Chrysostom). Rosenmüller, Lange, and Kalisch quote Pliny (xiii. 50) and Theophrastus ('Hist. Plant.,' iv. 8) to this effect. That the olive tree grows in Armenia is proved by the testimony of Strabo (xi. 575), Horace (Od. I. vii. 7), Virgil (Georg. ii. 3), Diodorus Siculus (i. 17), &c. On this point *vide* Kalisch. The leaf which the dove carried towards the ark was "taraf," freshly plucked; hence rightly translated by "viride" (Michaelis, Rosenmüller) rather than by "decerptum" (Chaldee, Arabic) or "raptum" (Calvin). Κάρφος (LXX.) is just the opposite of "fresh," viz., withered. **So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.**

Ver. 12.—**And he stayed.** וַיִּיָּחֶל; Niph. fut. of יָחַל (Gesenius); cf. וַיָּחֶל (ver. 10), Hiph. fut. of חוּל (Fürst, Delitzsch). Tayler Lewis, following Jewish authorities, would derive both from יָחַל; with Aben Ezra making the first a regular Niphal, and with Rashi the second a contracted Piel (*vide* Lange, p. 308; Clark's 'For. Theol. Lib.'). **Yet other seven days.** The frequent repetition of the number seven clearly points to the hebdomadal division of the week, and the institution of Sabbatic rest (*vide* ch. ii.

1—3, Expos.). **And sent forth the dove.** "The more we examine these acts of Noah, the more it will strike us that they must have been of a religious nature. He did not take such observations, and so send out the birds, as mere arbitrary acts, prompted simply by his curiosity or his impatience; but as a man of faith and prayer he inquired of the Lord. What more likely then that such inquiry should have its basis in solemn religious exercises, not arbitrarily entered into, but on days held sacred for prayer and religious rest?" (T. Lewis). **Which returned not again** (literally, *and it added not to return*) **unto him any more.**

Ver. 13.—**And it came to pass** (literally, *it was*) **in the six hundredth and first year** (of Noah's life; so LXX.), **in the first** month,—*τοῦ πρώτου μηνὸς*, (LXX.); the word for month (expressed in vers. 4, 14) being omitted in the Hebrew text for brevity,—**the first** day **of the month, the waters were dried up**—the root signifies to burn up or become dry in consequence of heat (Fürst); "it merely denotes the absence of water" (Gesenius)—**from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark**—*mikseh*, from *kasah*, to cover; used of the covering of the ark (Exod. xxvi. 14) and of the holy vessels (Num. iv. 8, 12), and hence supposed to be made of skins (Knobel, Bush); but "the deck of an ark on which the rain-storms spent their force must surely have been of as great stability as the ark itself (Lange)—**and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.**

Ver. 14.—**And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.** יָבְשָׁה. The three Hebrew verbs employed to depict the gradual cessation of the floods express a regular gradation; קָלַל (ver. 11), to be lightened, signifying their abatement or diminution (*κεκόπακε τὸ ὕδωρ*, LXX.); חָרַב (ver. 13), to be dried up, indicating the disappearance of the water (*ἐξέλιπε το ὕδωρ*, LXX.); יָבֵשׁ (ver. 14), to be dry, denoting the desiccation of the ground (*ἐξηράνθη ἡ γῆ*, LXX.). Cf. Isa. xix. 5, where there is a similar gradation: וְנָהָר יֶחֱרַב וְיָבֵשׁ, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLOOD.

(Reckoning from the first day of the year.)

		mos.	days		days
I.	Beginning of the Flood	1	17	=	47
	Continuance of Rain			=	40
	Prevalence of Waters			=	110
II.	The Ark touches Ararat	6	17	=	197
III.	The Mountains seen	9		=	270
	Raven sent after 40 days			=	310
	Dove sent ,, 7 ,,			=	317
	Dove sent ,, 7 ,,			=	324
	Dove sent ,, 7 ,,			=	331
IV.	The Waters dried up	12		=	360
V.	The Earth dry	13	27	=	417

The data are insufficient to enable us to determine whether the Noachic year was solar or lunar. It has been conjectured that the year consisted of twelve months of thirty days, with five intercalated days at the end to make up the solar year of three hundred and sixty-five days (Ewald); of seven months of thirty days and five of thirty-one (Bohlen); of five of thirty and seven of twenty-nine (Knobel); but the circumstance that the period from the commencement of the Deluge to the touching of Ararat extended over five months exactly, and that the waters are said to have previously prevailed for one hundred and fifty days, naturally leads to the conclusion that the months of Noah's year were equal periods of thirty days.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 4, 13.—*Mount Ararat, or the landing of the ark.* That disembarkment on the mountain heights of Ararat was an emblem of another landing which shall yet take place, when the great gospel ship of the Christian Church shall plant its living freight of redeemed souls upon the hills of heaven. Everything that Mount Ararat witnessed on that eventful day will yet be more conspicuously displayed in the sight of God's believing people who shall be counted worthy of eternal life.

I. SIN PUNISHED. *Mount Ararat was a solemn witness to the severity of God's judgments upon a guilty world.* Never had the world looked on such a vindication of the insulted holiness and offended justice of Almighty God, and never will it look upon another till the hour strikes when "the heavens, being on fire, shall dissolve" (2 Pet. iii. 10), and "the Lord himself shall be revealed in flaming fire" (2 Thess. i. 7).

II. GRACE REVEALED. *Mount Ararat saw Divine grace displayed to sinful men.* Pre-eminently Noah and his family were debtors to Divine grace that day when they

stepped forth from the ark; and who can doubt that a sense of the richness of Divine grace in saving them will be one of the first feelings to take possession of the souls of the ransomed on reaching heaven?

III. SALVATION ENJOYED. *Mount Ararat beheld salvation enjoyed by believing sinners.* The deliverance of Noah and his family was a type of the salvation of the saints, which, however, is immeasurably grander than that of Noah. 1. In *kind*, as being a spiritual, and not merely a temporal, deliverance. 2. In *degree*, as being complete; whereas Noah's was at the best an imperfect deliverance—a deliverance from the Flood, but not from that which caused the Flood—sin. 3. In *duration*. Noah's deliverance was only for a time—in the end he descended to the grave; the deliverance of the saints is for ever (Luke xx. 36).

IV. GRATITUDE EXPRESSED. *Mount Ararat heard the adorations and thanksgivings of a redeemed family.* In Noah's sacrifice was a wonderful commingling of ideas and emotions,—(1) faith, (2) penitence, (3) thanksgiving, (4) consecration,—all of which will have a place within the bosoms of the ransomed host who yet shall sit upon the sea of glass. If not the offering up of sacrificial victims, as the expression of the soul's faith, there will be (1) in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain; (2) the continual offering up of broken and of contrite hearts; (3) the chanting of perpetual hosannas and hallelujahs; and (4) the eternal consecration of our redeemed hearts to God.

V. SAFETY CONFIRMED. *Mount Ararat listened to the voice of God confirming the salvation of his people.* In two ways was it confirmed. (1) By a voice, and (2) by a sign—the rainbow. And so is the eternal happiness of God's believing people secured (1) by the sure word of promise (Rev. xxi. 3) and (2) by the covenant of grace (Rev. iv. 3).

Vers. 10—12.—*Hoping and waiting.* I. The PATIENCE of Noah's hope. 1. Patience a characteristic of all true hope (Rom. viii. 25). 2. Faith in the Divine covenant is the secret of hope's patience (Heb. xi. 1). 3. The patience of hope is always proportioned to the brightness of faith's vision.

II. The EAGERNESS of Noah's hope. 1. While waiting God's time he kept a steady outlook for the coming of the promise. 2. He employed different methods to discover its approach—the raven and the dove. 3. He sanctified the means he used by devotion.

III. The REWARD of Noah's hope. In due time the dove returned with an olive leaf, which was—1. A timely answer. 2. An intelligible answer. 3. A joyous answer; and—4. A sufficient answer.

Ver. 14.—*The returning of the waters, or the recall of Divine judgments.* I. GOD'S JUDGMENTS HAVE THEIR SPECIFIC PURPOSES. 1. *Separation*—the elimination of the righteous from the wicked. Under the present condition of the world there is a strange intermingling of the good and the evil. The tares and the wheat, the draw-net with good and bad fish (Matt. xiii.) are suggestive emblems of this mixed state of society. The grand object contemplated by Christianity is the elimination of the saintly element from that which is corrupt. For this end it lays a special injunction on the former to withdraw themselves from the company and contagion of the latter (2 Cor. vi. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 6; 1 Tim. vi. 5). Only it forbids men, under cover of real or pretended zeal for righteousness, to attempt any forcible separation of the commingled elements (Matt. xiii. 30). Yet what the hand of man cannot do the hand of God can—winnow the chaff from the wheat. He did so by the Flood. He did so by the incarnation (Matt. iii. 12). He will do so at the second advent (Matt. xiii. 30; xxv. 32). 2. *Condemnation*—the infliction of retribution on the finally impenitent. Undisguisedly was this the design of the fell catastrophe which overtook "the world of the ungodly" in the time of Noah. It was sent for the specific purpose of punishing their evil deeds. And so have all Divine judgments of a like kind, what we misname accidents,—catastrophes, floods, famines, pestilences, &c.,—a terrible ou look of wrath and judicial retribution to them who forget to humble themselves beneath the mighty hand of God. So certainly will the last great judgment, of which Noah's flood was a prophetic symbol and warning, have as its specific purpose the complete destruction of the finally impenitent (Rom. ii. 5; 2 Thess. i. 7; Heb.

x. 27; 2 Pet. iii. 7). 3. *Preservation*—the salvation of the faithful. This may be said to be the aim of all those minor troubles and afflictions that befall God's people on the earth (Rom. viii. 28; 2 Cor. iv. 17). It is specially so when on a larger scale he interposes to inflict his judgments on the world (Isa. xxvi. 9). When he overthrows the wicked (whether nation or individual) suddenly as in a moment, it is with an eye to the deliverance of his people. Examples—Pharaoh, Goliath, Haman, Herod, Belshazzar. It was so with Noah. The destruction of the antediluvian sinners was necessary, if the remnant of the primitive Church was to be saved. So may it be said that the future overthrow of the wicked is indispensable, if the eternal happiness of the redeemed is to be secured.

II. GOD'S JUDGMENTS HAVE THEIR APPOINTED TIMES. 1. Their *times of coming*. The hour of the commencement of the Flood was both fixed and announced 120 years before the event. Though not revealed, as in the case of the Noachic Deluge, the date of every event is as truly predetermined (cf. Gen. xviii. 14; Exod. ix. 5; Job vii. 1; Eccles. iii. 1; Jer. viii. 7; Acts xvii. 26). And God's judgments always keep their set times of coming, as the Flood came in the predicted hour for its arrival. 2. Their *times of continuance*. The flood of waters lingered on the earth for a season, but not for ever. From the moment when the first rain-drop fell from the leaden sky, after the Lord had shut the patriarch with his family and living creatures into the ark, till it could be said the earth was dry, one year and ten days passed away. So have all God's judgments, at least here, their limits. Upon sinful men his wrath is not poured out without measure. 3. Their *times of recall*. In the future world we do not read that there will be any recall of the Divine judgments; everlasting punishment (Matt. xxv. 46), fire that never shall be quenched (Mark ix. 43), everlasting destruction (2 Thess. i. 9) are some of the expressions employed to depict the fire-deluge of eternity. But here on earth God's judgments, being only for a set time, are subject to recall; and as they cannot anticipate the hour appointed for their coming, so neither can they linger beyond the moment assigned for their departure. Their recall too is, as in the case of Noah's flood—(1) An act of *grace* (Gen. viii. 1). "God remembered Noah." "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed" (Lam. iii. 22; cf. 2 Kings xiii. 23; Mark i. 41). (2) An act of *power* (vers. 2, 3). As in order to roll back the tide of waters he sent forth a wind and stopped up the flood-gates of the deep and the windows of heaven, so is he able to lay his hand upon all the powers and forces of the material universe, and make them cease their working as easily as he set them in operation.

III. GOD'S JUDGMENTS HAVE THEIR APPROPRIATE SIGNS. 1. *Signs of their approach*, which are commonly—(1) *The growing wickedness of man*, as in the days of Noah (ch. vi. 11, 12). When an individual or a nation is becoming mature in sin, then that individual or that nation is becoming ripe for judgment. So it was with Pharaoh, and afterwards with Israel, with Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, Rome. So will it be in the end of the world (cf. Rev. xiv. 15). (2) *Prelusive chastisements from God*, again as in the days of Noah (ch. vii. 10). The Deluge began with a rain-shower, which gradually became more violent as the days passed, and with the bursting forth of subterranean floods, which swelled the rivers, lakes, and oceans; all which must have been ominous indications that the long-threatened judgment was at last approaching. So the full outpouring of God's wrath is commonly heralded by anticipatory inflictions. 2. *Signs of their departure*, which are usually—(1) *The accomplishment of their mission*. Immediately it could be said, "All in whose nostrils was the breath of life died" (ch. vii. 22), it was added, "And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged" (ver. 1). (2) *The mitigation of their violence*. The quieting of the waters (ver. 1) was the first symptom of the passing of the storm to Noah; and so, when God's retributive judgments are about to be withdrawn, their severity begins to relax. (3) *The removal of their causes*. The second sign to Noah was the cessation of the rain and the retirement of the floods (ver. 2). So, when God's judgments are about to disappear, the agencies that brought them are visibly recalled. (4) *The arrival of little foretastes of deliverance*. Such was the grounding of the ark to Noah and his imprisoned family (ver. 4). (5) *The perceptible return of the previous condition of affairs*. This was symbolised by the reappearance of the mountain-tops (ver. 5).

IV. GOD'S JUDGMENTS HAVE THEIR INTERESTED OBSERVERS. Possibly the wicked are indifferent to the Divine judgments when they happen to be abroad upon the earth; but not so the righteous, to whom everything connected with them is of the utmost importance. Observers of God's judgments should be like Noah—1. *Hopeful*—expecting them to pass. Had Noah not anticipated the complete removal of the waters, he had not made a single experiment to discover how that removal was progressing. Let the saints learn from Noah to cherish hope in God. 2. *Prayerful.* There is good reason for believing that Noah sent forth the raven and the dove on the day of weekly rest, and after solemn religious exercises (*vide* Expos.). The saint's inquiries into God's judgments should always be conducted in a spirit of devotion. 3. *Intelligent*—i. e. capable of reading the signs of the times. When the dove came home to Noah with the fresh-gathered olive leaf, "he knew that the waters were abated from off the earth" (ver. 11). So God ever vouchsafes to devout souls, who seek them by faith, appropriate and adequate signs of his movements, which it becomes them to study and interpret. 4. *Patient*—seeking neither to outrun God's leading nor to anticipate God's directing, but, like Noah, calmly waiting the Divine order to advance to the new sphere and the new duty which the passing of his judgments may reveal. Noah waited fifty-seven days after the drying up of the waters before he left the ark, and then he only did so at God's command; wherefore, "be ye not unwise" by being over-hasty, "but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephes. v. 17).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*God's infinite care.* In the experience of Christians the joy of first believing is often followed by a time of discouragement. Freshness of feeling seems to fade. The "law of sin" makes itself felt. Yet it is just the training by which firmer faith and fuller joy are to be reached. Deep must have been the thankfulness of those in the ark; safe in the midst of the flood. But their faith was tried. Five months, and still no abatement. Noah may well have had misgivings (cf. Matt. xi. 3). But God had not forgotten him (cf. Mark vi. 48; John x. 14). He remembered not Noah only, but every creature in the ark (cf. Luke xii. 6). He saves to the uttermost (Heb. vii. 25). The time of trial was a prelude to complete deliverance (cf. Acts xiv. 22).

I. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN BELIEVERS ARE TEMPTED TO FEEL FORGOTTEN. When troubles gather, and prayers seem unanswered, it is hard to keep faith firm. The warning Heb. xii. 6, 7 often needful. Christians would fain be led in smooth ways. And when their course is irksome and discouraging they sometimes see the wind boisterous, and begin to sink. Still more surely does the feeling follow sin. The disciple has forgotten to watch; has trusted to his own strength; has ventured into temptation, and fallen. Then God is felt to be afar off (cf. Exod. xxxiii. 7). And there are times of discipline, when spiritual freedom seems denied, and the soul cannot cry Abba, and prayer seems choked (cf. Isa. xlix. 14). Perhaps it is to teach humility; perhaps to show some root of evil; perhaps to excite more hunger for communion with God.

II. BUT GOD DOES NOT FORGET. A creature's love may fail (Isa. xlix. 15), a creature's watchfulness may faint, but not God's. He made us; can he forget our wants? His purpose is our salvation; will he neglect any step? He gave his own Son for us; is anything else too great for his goodness? Not even thy coldness and unbelief can make him cease to care.

III. GOD'S CARE EXTENDS TO THE LEAST. Our Lord welcomed (1) those of small account (Matt. xxi. 16; Mark x. 49; Luke xviii. 16), and (2) the undeserving (Luke vii. 39; xv. 10; xix. 7). He cares also for small matters (cf. Luke xii. 28—30). What treasures of wisdom and love surround us on every side! These are not beneath his care. Will he not fulfil? (Rom. viii. 28).

IV. FREEDOM THROUGH THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. God's time not always what we should choose (cf. John vii. 6). Noah a prisoner of hope. God showed that the hope was well founded. The agent of deliverance "a wind"—the same word, both in Hebrew and in the LXX., as is used in Gen. i. 2 for the Spirit of God.

Doubtless the agent in drying up the water was a wind. But in the spiritual lesson we are reminded of the Holy Spirit. His work at first brought life on the earth; and his work prepared for repeopling it, and completed the work of Noah's deliverance. And his work gives us freedom, showing us the work of Christ, and our position as children of God.—M.

Vers. 1—5.—*Grace and providence.* The powers of material nature are obedient servants of God, and those who are the objects of his regard, remembered by him, are safely kept in the midst of the world's changes. "All things work together for their good." There is an inner circle of special providence in which the family of God, with those whose existence is bound up in it, is under the eye of the heavenly Father, and in the hollow of his hand. "And the ark rested" (ver. 4). We speak of the cradle of the human race being set on Mount Ararat; is it not well to remember—1. The new world came out of an ark of Divine grace. Religion is the real foundation of society. 2. The waves of the flood bore the ark to its resting-place. So the waters of affliction, though they heave our vessel and trouble our hearts with fear, carry us onward to a new and often higher standpoint of knowledge and faith. 3. While the flood bore the ark, God himself chose out the spot where it should end its awful journey. The Ararat of the new world was like the paradise of the first man—the nursery of a rising humanity; but whereas in the state of innocence it is a garden, in the case of the redeemed man it is a mountain, with its steep, rough places, its heights and depths, its trials and dangers. The humanity which started from Ararat carried with it at once the good and the evil of the old world which had passed away, and the mountain symbolised the complex treasury of possibilities, mingled with liabilities, which were laid up in the rescued race.—R.

Vers. 6—12.—*The dispensations of righteousness and love.* The raven and the dove. While this passage has its natural, historical fitness, we cannot overlook its symbolical significance. It seems to set forth the two administrations of God, both of them going forth from the same centre of his righteousness in which his people are kept safe. The one represented by the carrion bird, the raven, is THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUDGMENT, which goes forth to and fro until the waters are dried up from off the earth—finding a resting-place in the waters of destruction, though not a permanent rest; returning to the ark, as the beginning and the end of judgment is the righteousness of God. The dove is the emblem of DIVINE GRACE, spiritual life and peace. It cannot find rest in the waters of judgment until another seven days, another period of gracious manifestation, has prepared the world for it; then it brings with it the plucked-off olive leaf, emblem of retiring judgment and revealed mercy; and when yet another period of gracious manifestation has passed by, the dove shall return no more to the ark, for the ark itself is no more needed—the waters are abated from off the face of the earth. So we may say the raven dispensation was that which preceded Noah. Then followed the first sending forth of the dove unto the time of Moses, leading to a seven days' period of the ark life, waiting for another mission of grace. The dove brought back the olive leaf when the prophetic period of the old dispensation gave fuller promise of Divine mercy. But yet another period of seven days must transpire before the dove is sent forth and returns no more to the ark, but abides in the earth. After the two sacred intervals, the period of the law and the period of the prophets, which were both immediately connected with a special limited covenant such as is represented in the ark, there followed the world-wide mission of the Comforter. The waters were abated. The "*Grace and Truth*" took possession of man's world, cursed by sin, redeemed by grace.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 15—17.—**And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark.** For which command doubtless the patriarch waited, as he had done for instructions to enter in (ch. vii. 11), "being restrained by a hallowed modesty from allowing himself to enjoy the bounty of nature till he should hear the voice of God directing him to do so" (Calvin). **Thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.** The order is differ-

ent in ch. vii. 7, whence Ambrose noteth, "non commiscetur sexus in introitu, sed commiscetur in ingressu." **Bring forth with thee**—God having preserved alive the creatures that a twelvemonth before had been taken into the ark, and were now to be restored to their appropriate habitations on the earth—**every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh,** both **of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth** (cf. ch. vii. 21; ix. 10); **that they may breed abundantly**—*sharatz*, to creep or crawl, used of reptiles and small water animals (ch. i. 20; vii. 21); hence to swarm, or multiply (ch. ix. 7)—**in the earth, and be fruitful** (ch. i. 22), **and multiply**—literally, *become numerous*—**upon the earth.**

Vers. 18, 19.—**And Noah went forth,**—in obedience to the Divine command,—**and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him,**—in obedience to Noah, to whom alone the Divine instructions were communicated;—an early instance of filial subjection to parents. **Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl,** and **whatsoever creepeth upon the earth.** *I. e.* the chayyah, the remes, the 'oph, all creepers upon the ground (cf. ch. i. 26; vii. 8, 14), all of which had previously entered in. **After their kinds.** Hebrew, *families, tribes* (ch. x. 18); *i. e.* not confusedly, but in an orderly fashion, as they had come in, each one sorting to its kind. **Went forth out of the ark.**

Ver. 20.—**And Noah builded an altar.** *Mizbēach*, a place for slaying sacrifices, from *zabach*, to slaughter animals (ch. xxxi. 54), to slay in sacrifice (Levit. ix. 4; 1 Sam. i. 4), as θυσιαστήριον, from θύειν, is the first altar mentioned in history. The English term (from *altus*, high) signifies a high place, because the altar was commonly a raised structure or mound of earth or stones (Exod. xx. 24). Keil thinks that **altars** were not required prior to the Flood, the Divine presence being still visibly among men at the gate of Eden, "so that they could turn their offerings and their hearts towards that abode." Poole, Clarke, Bush, and Inglis hold that the antediluvian sacrifices presupposed an altar. **Unto the Lord.** *Jehovah*, the God of salvation. **And took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl.** *Vide* ch. vii. 2. "Seldom has there been a more liberal offering in proportion to the means of the giver. His whole stock of clean animals, wherewith to fill the world, was seven pairs of each" (Inglis). **And offered.** By Divine appointment, since his service was accepted; and "all religious services which are not perfumed with the odour of faith are of an ill savour before God" (Calvin); but "God is peculiarly well pleased with free-will offerings, and surely if ever an occasion existed for the exercise of grateful and adoring sentiments, the present was one" (Bush). **Burnt offerings.** *'ōlōth*, literally, *things that ascend*, from *'ālāh*, to go up, alluding not to the elevation of the victims on the altar, but to the ascension of the smoke of the burnt offerings to heaven (cf. Judges xx. 40; Jer. xlviii. 15; Amos iv. 10). **On the altar.**

Ver. 21—**And the Lord** (Jehovah) **smelled**—as is done by drawing the air in and out through the nostrils; from the root *ruach*, to breathe; hiph., to smell—**a sweet savour.** *Rēach hannichoach*, literally, an odour of satisfaction, acquiescence, or rest; from *nuach*, to rest, with an allusion to Noah's name (*vide* ch. v. 29); ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας (LXX.); (cf. Levit. ii. 12; xxvi. 31; Num. xv. 3; Ezek. vi. 13). The meaning is that the sacrifice of the patriarch was as acceptable to God as refreshing odours are to the senses of a man; and that which rendered it acceptable was (1) the feeling from which it sprang, whether gratitude or obedience; (2) the truths which it expressed—it was tantamount to an acknowledgment of personal guilt, a devout recognition of the Divine mercy, an explicit declaration that he had been saved or could only be saved through the offering up of the life of another, and a cheerful consecration of his redeemed life to God; (3) the great sacrifice of which it was a type. Paul, by using the language of the LXX. (Ephes. v. 2), shows that he regarded the two as connected. **And the Lord said in his heart.** *I. e.* resolved within himself. It is not certain that this determination on the part of Jehovah was at this time communicated to the patriarch (cf. ch. vi. 3, 7 for Divine inward resolves which were not at the moment made known), unless the correct reading be *to his* (*Noah's*) *heart*, meaning the Lord *comforted* him (cf. Judges xix. 3; Ruth ii. 13; Isa. xl. 2; Hosea ii. 14), which is barely probable. **I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.** Literally, *I will not add to curse.* Not a revocation of the curse of Gen. iii. 17, nor a pledge that such curse would not be duplicated. The language refers solely to the visitation of the Deluge, and promises not that God may not sometimes visit particular localities with a flood, but that another such world-wide catastrophe should never overtake the human race. **For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.** Ch. vi. 5 assigns this as the reason for man's destruction; a proof of inconsistency between the Elohistic author and his Jehovistic editor (Bleek). "Hic inconstantiæ videtur Deus accusari posse" (Luther). "God seems to contradict himself by having previously declared that the world must be destroyed because its iniquity was desperate" (Calvin). Some endeavour

to remove the incongruity by translating כִּי as *although* (Bush, Inglis), but "there are few (if any) places were כִּי can be rendered *although*" (T. Lewis). Others connect it with "for man's sake," as explanatory not of the promise, but of the past judgment (Murphy), or as stating that any future cursing of the ground would not be for man's sake (Jacobus). The true solution of the difficulty appears to lie in the clause "from his youth," as if God meant to say that whereas formerly he had visited man with judicial extermination on account of his absolute moral corruption, he would now have regard to the circumstance that man inherited his depravity through his birth, and, instead of smiting man with punitive destruction, would visit him with compassionate forbearance (Keil, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Tayler Lewis regards the expression as strongly anthropopathic, like ch. vi. 6, and indicative of the Divine regret at so calamitous an act as the Deluge, although that act was absolutely just and necessary. **Neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done.** There should be no more deluge, but—

Ver. 22.—**While the earth remaineth.** Literally, *as yet, all the days of the earth*, i. e. henceforth, so long as the earth continues, עֹד expressing the ideas of repetition and continuance (*vide* ver. 12). **Seed-time and harvest,**—from roots signifying to scatter, *e. g.* seed, and to cut off, specially grain; *σπέρμα καὶ θερισμός* (LXX.)—**and cold and heat,**—*ψύχος καὶ καῦμα* (LXX.)—**and summer and winter.** Properly the cutting off of fruits, from a root meaning to cut off, hence summer; and the time when fruits are plucked, hence autumn (including winter); the import of the root being to gather, to pluck off; *θέρος καὶ ἔαρ* (LXX.). The first term of each pair denotes the first half of the year, and the second term of each pair the second half. **And day and night** (cf. ch. i. 5) **shall not cease.** Hebrew, *lo yishbothu*, shall not sabbatise, or keep a day of rest; *i. e.* they shall continue ever in operation and succession. This Divine promise to conserve the orderly constitution and course of nature is elsewhere styled "God's covenant of the day and of the night" (cf. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 25).

TRADITIONS OF THE DELUGE.

1. The *Babylonian.* (1) From the Chaldean monuments. As deciphered from the eleventh tablet of the Izdubar series, the story of the Flood is briefly this:—Izdubar, whom George Smith identifies with Nimrod, the founder of Babylonia, is informed by **Hasisadra**, whom the same authority believes to represent Noah, of a Divine commandment which he had received to construct a ship after a specified pattern, in which to save himself and "the seed of all life," because the city Surippak wherein he dwelt was to be destroyed. After first attempting to excuse himself, as he explains to Izdubar, on the ground that "young and old will deride him," Hasisadra builds the ship, and causes to go up into it "all my male servants and my female servants, the beast of the field, the animal of the field, the sons of the people, all of them," while the god Shamas makes a flood, causing it to rain heavily. The flood destroys all life from the face of the earth. Six days and nights the storm rages; on the seventh it grows calm. Twelve measures above the sea rises the land. The ship is stopped by a mountain in the country of Nizir. After seven days Hasisadra sends forth a dove, "which went and turned, and a resting-place it did not find, and it returned;" then a swallow, and finally a raven. On the decrease of the waters he sends forth the animals, and builds an altar on the peak of the mountain, and pours out a libation ('Chaldean Genesis,' ch. xvi.; 'Records of the Past,' vol. vii. 133—141). (2) From Berosus. The god Kronos appeared to Xisuthrus, the tenth king of Babylon, in a vision, and warned him of an approaching deluge upon the fifteenth day of the month Desius, by which mankind would be destroyed. Among other things the god instructed him to build a vessel for the preservation of himself and friends, and specimens of the different animals. Obeying the Divine admonition, he built a vessel five stadia in length and two in breadth, and conveyed into it his wife, children, and friends. After the flood had been upon the earth he three times sent out birds from the vessel, which returned to him the second time with mud upon their feet, and the third time returned to him no more. Finding that the vessel had grounded on a mountain, Xisuthrus disembarked with his wife and children, and, having constructed an altar, offered sacrifices to the gods, in reward for which he was raised immediately to heaven ('Chaldean Genesis,' ch. iii.; Kalisch, p. 202; 'Encyclopedia Britannica,' art. Deluge, ninth edition).

2. The *Egyptian.* Though commonly

alleged to be entirely unknown in the Nile valley, it is certain that the germs of the Deluge story are to be discovered even there. According to the Egyptian historian Manetho, quoted by Eusebius, Thoth, the first Hermes, erected certain pillars with inscriptions, which, *after the Deluge*, were transcribed into books. Plato also states in the Timæus (chap. v.) that a certain Egyptian priest informed Solon that the gods, when wishing to purify the earth, were accustomed to overwhelm it by a deluge, from which the herdsmen and shepherds saved themselves on the tops of the mountains. Josephus ('Ant.,' I. iii. 9) certifies that Hieronymus the Egyptian refers to the Flood. A conception altogether analogous to that of Genesis is likewise to be found in a myth belonging to the archaic period of Seti I., which represents Ra, the Creator, as being disgusted with the insolence of mankind, and resolving to exterminate them (*vide* Inscription of the Destruction of Mankind, 'Records of the Past,' vol. vi. p. 103). In short, the Egyptians believed not that there was no deluge, but that there had been several. The absence of any indications of this belief in the recovered literature of ancient Egypt is not sufficient to set aside the above concurrent testimonies to its existence (Kitto, 'Bible Illustrations,' vol. i. p. 150; Rawlinson's 'Historical Illustrations of O. T.;' 'Encycl. Britan.,' art. Deluge, ninth edition).

3. The *Indian*. Through the theft of the sacred Vedas by the giant Hayagrivah, the human race became fearfully degenerate, with the exception of seven saints and the good King Satyavrata, to whom the Divine spirit Vishnu appeared in the form of a fish, informing him of his purpose to destroy the earth by a flood, and at the same time to send a ship miraculously constructed for the preservation of himself and the seven holy ones, along with their wives, and one pair of each of all the irrational animals. After seven days the rain descended, when Satyavrata, confiding in the promises of the god, saw a huge ship drawing near, into which he entered as directed. Then the god appeared in the form of a fish a million miles long, with an immense horn, to which the king made the ship fast, and, drawing it for many years (a night of Brahma), at length landed it upon the highest peak of Mount Himavân. When the flood abated the god arose, struck the demon Hayagrivah, recovered the sacred books, instructed Satyavrata in all heavenly sciences, and appointed him the seventh Manu, from whom the second population of the earth descended in a supernatural manner, whence man is styled Manudaha (born of Manu). *Vide* Kalisch, p. 203; Auberlen's 'Divine Revelation,' p. 169 (Clark's 'For. Theol. Lib.').

4. The *Grecian*. It is sufficient here to refer to the well-known story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, first given in Pindar, and afterwards related by Apollodorus, Plutarch, Lucian, and Ovid, whose account bears so close a resemblance to the Biblical narrative as to suggest the probability of access to Hebrew or Syrian sources of information. The previous corruption of manners and morals, the eminent piety of Deucalion, the determination "genus mortale sub undis perdere," the construction of a boat by Divine direction, the bursting of the storm, the rising of the waters, the universal ocean in which "jamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant," the subsidence of the flood, the landing of the boat on Parnassus with its double peak, the consultation of the Deity "per sacras sortes," and the answer of the god as to how the earth was to be repeopled "ossaque post tergum magnæ jactate parentis," are detailed with such graphic power as makes them read "like amplified reports of the record in Genesis." Indeed, by Philo, Deucalion was distinctly regarded as Noah. Cf. Ovid, 'Metamorph.,' lib. i. f. vii.; 'Kalisch on Genesis,' p. 203; Kitto's 'Bible Illustrations,' p. 150 (Porter's edition); 'Lange on Genesis,' p. 294, note by Tayler Lewis; Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' art. Noah.

5. The *American*. Traditions of the Flood appear to be even more numerous in the New World than the Old. The Esquimaux in the North, the Red Indians, the Mexicans and the Brazilians in the central parts of America, and the Peruvians in the South have all their peculiar versions of the Deluge story. Chasewee, the ancestor of the Dogrib Indians, on the Mackensie river, according to Franklin, escaped in a canoe from a flood which overflowed the earth, taking with him all manner of four-footed beasts and birds. The Astecs, the Mixtecs, the

Zapotecs, and other nations inhabiting Mexico all have, according to Humboldt, their Noahs, Xisuthrus, or Manus (called Coxcox, Teocipactli, or Tezpi), who saves himself by a raft, or in a ship, which lands upon the summit of Colhuacan, the Ararat of the Mexicans. The legends of the Tamanacks relate that a man and woman saved themselves from the Deluge, and repeopled the earth by casting behind them the fruits of the Mauritia palm tree (Kalisch, p. 205; Auberlen's 'Divine Revelation,' p. 171; Smith's 'Dictionary,' art. Noah).

What, then, is the conclusion to be drawn from this universal diffusion of the Deluge story? The theory of Schirren and Gerland, as stated by the writer of the article Deluge in the 'Encyclopedia Britannica,' is that the Deluge stories were originally ether-myths, descriptive of the phenomena of the sky, which have been transferred from the celestial regions to the earth; but, as Kalisch justly observes, "the harmony between all these accounts is an undeniable guarantee that the tradition is no idle invention;" or, as is forcibly stated by Rawlinson, of a tradition existing among all the great races into which ethnologists have divided mankind,—the Shemites, the Hamites, the Aryans, the Turanians,—"but one rational account can be given, viz., that it embodies the recollection of a fact in which all mankind was concerned."

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 15—22.—*The saint and the Saviour.* I. THE SAVIOUR'S INJUNCTION TO THE SAINT (ver. 15). The command which God addressed to Noah and the other inmates of the ark to go forth and take possession of the renovated earth may be regarded as emblematic of that Divine instruction which shall yet be given to the saints to go forth and take possession of the new heavens and the new earth, when the great gospel ship of the Christian Church, now floating on the troubled sea of life, shall have landed with its living freight upon the coasts of bliss. The Divine command to Noah was an order to pass—1. *From a situation of comparative peril to a position of perfect safety.* Though, certainly, before the bursting of the storm the only available shelter was that afforded by the ark, "all flesh and all in whose nostrils was the breath of life" that remained without having perished, yet even inside the ark must have seemed to the inexperienced voyagers to be at the best of only doubtful security. But now whatever danger had been connected with their twelve months' drifting across a trackless sea was at an end. And so, though only within the shelter of the Christian Church can safety be enjoyed, yet at the best it is not entirely free from peril. What with temptations and afflictions, "fears within and foes without," there always is a risk of making shipwreck of the soul (1 Tim. i. 19); but when life's voyage has been finished, and the new heavens and the new earth have been revealed, the salvation of the saints will be complete. 2. *From a period of patient hoping to a season of delightful enjoying.* It is doubtful if we always sufficiently realise the greatness of the strain to which the faith of the patriarch was subjected when he was shut up within the ark and left there for over a twelvemonth without any direct communication from God, with nothing for his faith to rest upon but the simple promise that he and his should be saved. At the best it was only little foretastes or earnests of God's complete salvation which he enjoyed: first in being sheltered from the storm; next in being floated above the waters; then in touching land upon Ararat; and again in getting signs of the approaching deliverance. Throughout the entire period he could only live in hope and patiently endure. But here at length was the time of full fruition come. Go forth from the ark. And so it is with Christ's saints universally. Here are only earnests of the inheritance (Ephes. i. 14); there alone is the inheritance itself (Col. i. 12). Now is the time for hoping and waiting (Rom. viii. 25); then is the season for seeing and enjoying (1 John iii. 2). Here the saints rest upon the promise as their guarantee (2 Tim. i. 1; Heb. iv. 1); there the saints behold and experience its realisation (Heb. vi. 12). 3. *From a condition of restrained activity to a sphere of higher and freer service.* Not that Noah's life within the ark could in any sense have been one of idleness, and neither are the lives of Christians on the earth and in the Church below; but Noah entered on another and a nobler kind of work when he left the ark than that which had engaged his powers within its precincts, and so do they who are counted worthy of attaining to Christ's

kingdom and glory. Here, like Noah's, the saint's powers of service are limited and confined; there they shall attain to greater freedom and fuller scope (1 Cor. xiii. 9—12; Rev. iv. 8).

II. The saint's response to the Saviour (ver. 18). The command to leave the ark which God addressed to Noah was obeyed—1. *Immediately*. We can imagine that everything was in a state of readiness for departure when the marching orders came, so that there was no need to interpose delay. So was it with the Hebrews when the Lord led them forth from Egypt (Exod. xii. 11); so should Christians be always ready for their Master's summons, whether to pass from affliction (Isa. lii. 11) or into it (ch. xxii. 1; Acts xxi. 13), to enter upon a new sphere of work (Isa. vi. 8) or retire from an old one into silence (1 Kings xvii. 3); to go down into the grave (2 Tim. iv. 6) and wait for the apocalypse of the saints (Job xiv. 14), or to go up into glory and partake of the inheritance of the saints in light (Matt. xxiv. 44). 2. *Universally*. Not the patriarch alone, but all his family and all the creatures came forth; so did all God's people come forth from the house of bondage (Exod. x. 26); and so will all Christ's redeemed ones who have entered into the salvation ark of his Church emerge at last into the light and felicity of heaven (Isa. li. 11; Luke xii. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 1 Thess. iv. 14). 3. *Joyfully*. This we may infer. After the twelve months' isolation, and confinement, and comparative peril we need not doubt that Noah and his family exulted with delight, and that even the lower creatures were not strangers to agreeable sensations. It was a picture of the happiness which even here the saints enjoy in the Divine interpositions on their behalf; but especially of the universal thrill of gladness which God's redeemed family, and even "the creature itself," shall experience in the palingenesia of the heavens and the earth (Isa. xxxv. 10; Rom. viii. 19—23). 4. *Finally*. They were never more to return to the ark, because never again should there be a flood. It was a delightful symbol of the completeness and finality of God's salvation when the saints shall have been landed on the heights of bliss (Rev. xxi. 4; xxii. 3—5).

III. The saint's worship of the Saviour (ver. 20). As Noah's first act on stepping forth from the ark was to build an altar unto the Lord, so the saint's first work on reaching heaven will be to worship; and this worship will be—1. *Believing*. This was implied in the very thought of offering up a sacrifice to Jehovah, but specially so in the circumstances in which the patriarch was then placed. The visible symbol of the Divine presence had retired to its original dwelling-place in the heavens, and yet Noah had as little doubt as ever he had that there was a God to worship. The building of an altar, therefore, just then and there was an explicit declaration of his faith. Without faith there can be no worship of God either here or there, on earth or in heaven (Heb. xi. 6). 2. *Thankful*. The offering of Noah was designed as an expression of his gratitude for the Lord's mercy, and so should the worship of the saints on earth be characterised by the same spirit (Phil. iv. 6), as we know the adorations of the saints before the throne are (Rev. vii. 12). 3. *Generous*. Noah took of every clean beast and every clean fowl, *i. e.* one of seven or one of fourteen (*vide* Expos.), in either case a munificent tribute to the God of his salvation. How seldom is the like liberality exhibited by Christ's worshippers on earth! What a blessed thought it is that among the saints above there will be no temptation to such meanness as is often practised by the saints below! 4. *Sincere*. It was no merely formal service that the patriarch presented. The burnt offering was a symbolic declaration of his self-consecration—body, soul, and spirit—to the God who had redeemed him. Of this sort is the service which Christ expects and believers should render on the earth (Matt. xvi. 24; Luke xiv. 26; Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 20). Of such kind will be the worship of the saints in heaven (Rev. xxii. 3).

IV. The Saviour's response to the saint (vers. 21, 22). As the sacrifice of Noah was well-pleasing unto God, so will the worship of the saints find acceptance in his sight. And this acceptance of the sacrifices of the glorified, like the reception of Noah's offering—1. *Will consist in* the cherishing by God of a feeling of sweet complacency towards the worshippers. As from the burning victims upon Noah's altar there came up into the Divine nostrils a savour of rest, so from the spiritual sacrifices of Christians even here there ascends an odour of a sweet smell unto God (Phil. iv. 18), while in the upper sanctuary the services of the redeemed go up con-

tinually before God like the smoke of incense (Rev. viii. 4). 2. *Will be based upon* the odour of the sacrifice of Christ, of which Noah's was the type. It was not the actual service of Noah, considered as an *opus operatum*, that produced the feeling of complacency in God (Micah vi. 7), but the sacrificial work of Christ, to which the faith of the patriarch had an outlook (Ephes. v. 2). For the sake of that offering up of himself once for all in the end of the world that was to be accomplished by the woman's seed, and which Noah's faith truly, however dimly, embraced, God accepted him and his. That same offering is the ground or basis on which all the saints' sacrifices are accepted either on earth (1 Pet. ii. 5) or in heaven (Rev. v. 6). 3. *Will express itself through* the perpetuation of the worshipper's safety. (1) By averting all evil. "There shall be no more curse" (Rev. xxii. 3), as God determined in his heart (ver. 21), and afterwards expressed to Noah (ch. ix. 15), never more to curse the ground or flood the earth. (2) By securing all good, which was symbolised by the confirmation of the covenant of day and night.

Lessons :—1. Live in a state of readiness for the glorious appearing of the Son of man (Titus i. 13). 2. Expectantly wait for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19). 3. Learn the nature of the saint's service in the heavenly world (Rev. v. 8). 4. Note the security for the perpetuity of heaven's blessedness—Christ's sacrifice and God's covenant.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 13—19.—*Rest and restoration.* Noah (Rest) comes forth from the ark in the sabbath century of his life, the six hundred and first year. He lived after the Flood 350 years, the half week of centuries; his life represented *a* rest, but not *the* rest, a half sabbath, promise of the *rest* which remains to the people of God.

I. An example of faith. 1. Not until God spake did Noah dare to do more than lift off the covering and look. 2. At the heavenly word the family, redeemed by grace, takes possession of the redeemed habitation.

II. The redeemed life in its new appointment. Go forth of the ark into the new world. There is the keynote of the Bible. Man redeemed is man living by every word of God. 1. By Divine commandment going into the prepared refuge. 2. By Divine commandment taking down old bounds and occupying new places. 3. *Going forth* into a promised land rejoicing in a *pledged future*. 4. Carrying with him all lower creatures into a new, progressive, God-blessed inheritance. The whole creation groaning and travailing, the whole creation participating in the Divine deliverance.—R.

Vers. 20—22.—*The sanctification of the earth.* The sweet savour of man's burnt offerings—(1) not the offerings of caprice, but the fulfilment of *Divine commands*, (2) the reciprocation of Heaven's *communications*—(3) ascends from the earth-built altar and fills the Lord with *satisfaction*. In return for that obedience and devotion the curse is removed, the earth is sealed with the saving strength of God in a covenant of peace.

I. Religious life is acceptable to God when it is (1) grateful acknowledgment of his mercy; (2) humble obedience to his own revealed will; (3) consecration of place, time, life, possessions to him.

II. Union and communion between God and man is the foundation on which all earthly happiness and security rest.

III. The forbearance and mercy of God in his relation to those whose hearts are yet full of evil is at once probation and grace. The ground is not cursed any more for man's sake, but, the more evidently, that which falls upon the ground may fall upon man himself. The higher revelations of God in the post-Noachic period were certainly larger bestowments of grace, but at the same time they involved a larger responsibility. So the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reasons as to the punishment of those who trample underfoot the covenant of the gospel. The progressive covenants which make up the history of God's grace recorded in the Scriptures are progressive separations of the evil and the good, therefore they point to that complete and final separation in which God's righteousness shall be eternally glorified.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1.—**And God**—*Elohim*, not because belonging to the Elohistic document (Bleek, Tuch, Colenso); but rather because throughout this section the Deity is exhibited in his relations to his creatures—**blessed**—a repetition of the primal blessing rendered necessary by the devastation of the Flood (cf. ch. i. 28)—**Noah and his sons,**—as the new heads of the race,—**and said unto them,**—audibly, in contrast to ch. viii. 21, 22, which was not addressed to the patriarch, but spoken by God to himself in his heart, as if internally resolving on his subsequent course of action,—**Be fruitful, and multiply.** A favourite expression of the Elohist (cf. ch. i. 28; viii. 17; ix. 1, 7; xvii. 20; xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11; xlvii. 27; xlviii. 14), (Tuch); but (1) the apparently great number of passages melts away when we observe the verbally exact reference of ch. viii. 17; ix. 1, 7 to i. 28; and of ch. xlviii. 4 to xxxv. 11; (2) the Elohist does not always employ his "favourite expression" where he might have done so, as, *e. g.*, not in ch. i. 22; xvii. 6; xxviii. 14; (3) the Jehovist does not avoid it where the course of thought necessarily calls for it (*vide* Levit. xxvi. 9), (Keil). **And replenish the earth.** The words, "and subdue it," which had a place in the Adamic blessing, and which the LXX. insert here in the Noachic (*καὶ κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς*), are omitted for the obvious reason that the world dominion originally assigned to man in Adam had been forfeited by sin, and could only be restored through the ideal Man, the woman's seed, to whom it had been transferred at the fall. Hence says Paul, speaking of Christ: "*καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ* (Ephes. i. 22); and the writer to the Hebrews: *νῦν δὲ οὔπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ* (*i. e.* man) *τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα, τὸν δὲ βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν, διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου, δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον* (*i. e.* the world dominion which David, Ps. viii. 6, recognised as belonging to God's ideal man) *ὅπως χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσηται θανάτου* (ch. ii. 8, 9). The original relationship which God had established between man and the lower creatures having been disturbed by sin, the inferior animals, as it were, gradually broke loose from their condition of subjection. As corruption deepened in the human race it was only natural to anticipate that man's lordship over the animal creation would become feebler and feebler. Nor, perhaps, is it an altogether violent hypothesis that, had the Deluge not intervened, in the course of time the beast would have become the master and man the slave. To prevent any such apprehensions in the future, as there was to be no second deluge, the relations of man and the lower creatures were to be placed on a new footing. Ultimately, in the palingenesia, they would be completely restored (cf. Isa. xi. 6); in the mean time, till that glorious consummation should arrive, the otherwise inevitable encroachments of the creatures upon the human family in its sin-created weakness should be restrained by a principle of fear. That was the first important modification made upon the original Adamic blessing.

Ver. 2.—**And the fear of you and the dread of you.** Not simply of Noah and his sons, but of man in general. **Shall be.** Not for the first time, as it could not fail to be evoked by the sin of man during the previous generations, but, having already been developed, it was henceforth to be turned back upon the creature rather than directed against man. **Upon.** The verb *to be* is first construed with עַל, and afterwards with בְּ. The LXX. render both by *ἐπί*, though perhaps the latter should be taken as equivalent to *ἐν*, in which case the three clauses of the verse will express a gradation. The dread of man shall first overhang the beasts, then it shall enter into and take possession of them, and finally under its influence they shall fall into man's hand. **Every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon** (literally, *in*; vide *supra*. Murphy translates *with*) **all that moveth upon the earth, and upon** (literally, *in*) **all the fishes of the sea.** This does not imply that the animals may not sometimes rise against man and destroy him (cf. Exod. viii. 6, 17, 24; Levit. xxvi. 22; 1 Kings xiii. 24, 25; xx. 36; 2 Kings ii. 24; Ezek. xiv. 15; Acts xii. 23, for instances in which the creatures were made ministers of Divine justice), but simply that the normal condition of the lower creatures will be one of instinctive dread of man, causing them rather to avoid than to seek his presence—a statement sufficiently confirmed by the facts that wherever human civilisation penetrates, there the dominion of the beasts retires; that even ferocious animals, such as lions, tigers, and other beasts of prey, unless provoked, usually flee from man rather than assail him. **Into your hand are they delivered.** Attested by (1) man's actual dominion over such of the creatures as are either immediately needful for or helpful to him, such as the horse, the ox, the sheep, &c.;

and (2) by man's capability of taming and so reducing to subjection every kind of wild beast—lions, tigers, &c.

Ver. 3.—**Every**—obviously admitting of "exceptions to be gathered both from the nature of the case and from the distinction of clean and unclean beasts mentioned before and afterwards" (Poole)—**moving thing that liveth**—clearly excluding such as had died of themselves or been slain by other beasts (cf. Exod. xxii. 31; Levit. xxii. 8)—**shall be meat for you.** Literally, *to you it shall be for meat*. Though the distinction between unclean and clean animals as to food, afterwards laid down in the Mosaic code (Levit. xi. 1—31), is not mentioned here, it does not follow that it was either unknown to the writer or unpractised by the men before the Flood. **Even as the green herb have I given you all things.** An allusion to ch. i. 29 (Rosenmüllér, Bush); but *vide infra*. The relation of this verse to the former has been understood as signifying—1. That animal food was expressly prohibited before the Flood, and now for the first time permitted (Mercerus, Rosenmüller, Candlish, Clarke, Murphy, Jamieson, Wordsworth, Kalisch)—the ground being that such appears the obvious import of the sacred writer's language. 2. That, though permitted from the first, it was not used till postdiluvian times, when men were explicitly directed to partake of it by God (Theodoret, Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther, Pererius)—the reason being that prior to the Flood the fruits of the earth were more nutritious and better adapted for the sustenance of man's physical frame, propter excellentem terræ bonitatem præstantemque vim alimenti quod fructus terræ suppeditabant homini, while after it such a change passed upon the vegetable productions of the ground as to render them less capable of supporting the growing feebleness of the body, invalidam ad bene alendum hominem (Pererius). 3. That whether permitted or not prior to the Flood, it was used, and is here for the first time formally allowed (Keil, Alford, 'Speaker's Commentary'); in support of which opinion it may be urged that the general tendency of subsequent Divine legislation, until the fulness of the times, was ever in the direction of concession to the infirmities or necessities of human nature (cf. Matt. xix. 8). The opinion, however, which appears to be the best supported is—4. That animal food was permitted before the fall, and that the grant is here expressly renewed (Justin Martyr, Calvin, Willet, Bush, Macdonald, Lange, Quarry). The grounds for this opinion are —(1) That the language of ch. i. 29 does not explicitly forbid the use of animal food. (2) That science demonstrates the existence of carnivorous animals prior to the appearance of man, and yet vegetable products alone were assigned for their food. (3) That shortly after the fall animals were slain by Divine direction for sacrifice, and probably also for food—at least this latter supposition is by no means an unwarrantable inference from ch. iv. 4 (*q. v.*). (4) That the words, "as the green herb," even if they implied the existence of a previous restriction, do not refer to ch. i. 29, but to ch. i. 30, the green herb in the latter verse being contrasted with the food of man in ch. i. 29. Solomon Glass thus correctly indicates the connection and the sense: "ut viridem herbam (illis), sic illa omnia dedi vobis" ('Sacr. Phil.,' lib. iii. tr. 2, c. xxii. 2). (5) That a sufficient reason for mentioning the grant of animal food in this connection may be found in the subjoined restriction, without assuming the existence of any previous limitation.

Ver. 4.—**But**—אַךְ, an adverb of limitation or exception, as in Levit. xi. 4, introducing a restriction on the foregoing precept—**flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof.** Literally, *with its soul, its blood;* the blood being regarded as the seat of the soul, or life principle (Levit. xvii. 11), and even as the soul itself (Levit. xvii. 14). The idea of the unity of the soul and the blood, on which the prohibition of blood is based, comes to light everywhere in Scripture. In the blood of one mortally wounded his soul flows forth (Lam. ii. 12), and he who voluntarily sacrifices himself pours out his soul unto death (Isa. liii. 12). The murderer of the innocent slays the soul of the blood of the innocent (*ψυχὴν αἵματος ἀθώου*, Deut. xxvii. 25), which also cleaves to his (the murderer's) skirts (Jer. ii. 34; cf. Prov. xxviii. 17, blood of a soul; cf. Gen. iv. 10 with Heb. xii. 24; Job xxiv. 12 with Rev. vi. 9; *vide* also Ps. xciv. 21; Matt. xxiii. 35). Nor can it be said to be exclusively peculiar to Holy Scripture. In ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics the hawk, which feeds on bloods, represents the soul. Virgil says of a dying person, "purpuream vomit ille animam" ('Æneid,' ix. 349). The Greek philosophers taught that the blood was either the soul (Critias), or the soul's food (Pythagoras), or the soul's seat (Empedocles), or the soul's producing cause (the Stoics); but only Scripture reveals the true relation between them both when it declares the blood to be not the soul absolutely, but the means of its self-attestation (*vide* Delitzsch's 'Bib. Psychology,' div. iv. sec. xi.). **Shall ye not eat.** Not referring to, although certainly forbidding, the eating of flesh taken from a living animal (Raschi, Cajetan, Delitzsch, Luther, Poole, Jamieson)—a fiendish custom which may have been practised among the antediluvians, as, according to travellers, it is, or was, among modern Abyssinians; rather interdicting the flesh of slaughtered

animals from which the blood has not been properly drained (Calvin, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Wordsworth). The same prohibition (commonly regarded by the Hebrew doctors as the seventh of the Noachic precepts which were enjoined upon all nations; *vide infra*, ver. 6) was afterwards incorporated in the Mosaic legislation (cf. Levit. iii. 17; vii. 26, 27; xvii. 10—14; xix. 26; Deut. xii. 16, 23, 24; xv. 23), and subsequently imposed upon the Gentile converts in the Christian Church by the authority of the Holy Ghost and the apostles (Acts xv. 28, 29). Among other reasons, doubtless, for the original promulgation of this law were these: — 1. A desire to guard against the practice of cruelty to animals (Chrysostom, Calvin, 'Speaker's Commentary'). 2. A design to hedge about human life by showing the inviolability which in God's eye attached to even the lives of the lower creatures (Calvin, Willet, Poole, Kalisch, Murphy). 3. The intimate connection which even in the animal creation subsisted between the blood and the life (Kurtz, 'Sacr. Worship,' I. A. 5). 4. Its symbolic use as an atonement for sin (Poole, Delitzsch, 'Bib. Psy.' iv. 11; Keil, Wordsworth, Murphy). That the restriction continues to the present day may perhaps be argued from its having been given to Noah, but cannot legitimately be inferred from having been imposed on the Gentile converts to Christianity as one τῶν ἐπάναγκες τούτων, from the burden of which they could not be excused (Clarke), as then, by parity of reasoning, meat offered to idols would be equally forbidden, which it is not, except when the consciences of the weak and ignorant are endangered (Calvin).

Ver. 5. — **And surely.** Again the conjunction אַךְ introduces a restriction. The blood of beasts might without fear be shed for necessary uses, but the blood of man was holy and inviolable. Following the LXX. (καὶ γάρ), Jerome, Pererius, Mercerus, Calvin, Poole, Willet give a causal sense to the conjunction, as if it supplied the reason of the foregoing restriction—a sense which, according to Fürst ('Heb. Lex.,' *sub nom.*) it sometimes, though rarely, has; as in 2 Kings xxiv. 3; Ps. xxxix. 12; lxviii. 22; but in each case אַךְ is better rendered "surely." **Your blood of your lives.** (1) *For* your souls, *i. e.* in requital for them—*lex talionis*, blood for blood, life for life (Kalisch, Wordsworth, Bush); (2) *for* your souls, *i. e.* for their protection (Gesenius, Michaelis, Schumann, Tuch); (3) *from* your souls—a prohibition against suicide (Samaritan); (4) *with reference to* your souls,—לְ =*quoad* (Ewald, 'Heb. Syn.,' 310 *a*),—as if specifying the particular blood for which exaction would be made (Keil); (5) *of* your souls, belonging to them, or residing in them (LXX., Syriac, Vulgate, A. V., Calvin, Rosenmüller (qui ad animas vestras pertinet), Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary')—although, according to Kalisch, לְ cannot have the force of a genitive after דִּמְכֶם, a substantive with a suffix; but *vide* Levit. xviii. 20, 23; cf. Ewald, 'Heb. Syn.,' p. 113. Perhaps the force of לְ may be brought out by rendering "your blood *to the extent of* your lives;" *i. e.* not all blood-letting, but that which proceeds to the extent of taking life (cf. ver. 15: "There shall no more be waters *to the extent of* a flood"). **Will I require.** Literally, *search after*, with a view to punishment; hence avenge (cf. ch. xlii. 22; Ezek. xxxiii. 6; Ps. ix. 13). **At** (literally, *from*) **the hand of every beast will I require it.** Not "an awful warning against cruelty to the brute creation!" (Clarke), but a solemn proclamation of the sanctity of human life, since it enacted that that beast should be destroyed which slew a man—a statute afterwards incorporated in the Mosaic legislation (Exod. xxi. 28—32), and practised even in Christian times; "not for any punishment to the beast, which, being under no law, is capable of neither sin nor punishment, but for caution to men" (Poole). If this practice appears absurd to some moderns (Dr. H. Oort, 'The Bible for Young People,' p. 103), it was not so to Solon and Draco, in whose enactments there was a similar provision (Delitzsch, Lange). **And at** (*from*) **the hand of man; at** (or *from*) **the hand of every man's brother.** Either (1) *two* persons are here described—(*a*) the individual man himself, and (*b*) his brother, *i. e.* the suicide and the murderer (Maimonides, Wordsworth, Murphy), or the murderer and his brother man, *i. e.* kinsman, or *goël* (Michaelis, Bohlen, Baumgarten, Kalisch, Bush), or the ordinary civil authorities (Kalisch, Candlish, Jamieson)—or (2) *one*, viz., the murderer, who is first generically distinguished from the beast, and then characterised as his victim's brother; as thus—"at" or from "the hand of man," as well as beast; "from the hand of the individual man, or every man (cf. ch. xlii. 25; Num. xvii. 17 for this distributive use of אִישׁ) his brother," supplying a new argument against homicide (Calvin, Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Lange). The principal objection to discovering Goëlism in the phraseology is that it requires מִיַּד to be understood in two different senses, and the circumstance, that the institution of the magistracy appears to be hinted at in the next verse, renders it unnecessary to detect it in this. **Will I require the life** (or *soul*) **of man.** The specific manner in which this inquisition after blood should be carried out is indicated in the words that follow.

Ver. 6.—**Whoso sheddeth.** Literally, *he shedding*, i. e. wilfully and unwarrantably; and not simply *accidentally*, for which kind of manslaughter the law afterwards provided (*vide* Num. xxxv. 11); or *judicially*, for that is commanded by the present statute. **Man's blood.** Literally, *blood of the man*, human blood. **By man.** Not openly and directly by God, but by man himself, acting of course as God's instrument and agent—an instruction which involved the setting up of the magisterial office, by whom the sword might be borne ("Hic igitur fons est, ex quo manat totum jus civile et jus gentium." —Luther. Cf. Num. xxxv. 29—31; Rom. xiii. 4), and equally laid a basis for the law of the *goël* subsequently established in Israel (Deut. xix. 6; Josh. xx. 3). The Chaldee paraphrases, "with witnesses by sentence of the judges." The LXX. substitutes for "by man" *ἀντὶ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ*—an interpretation followed by Professor Lewis, who quotes Jona ben Gannach in its support. **Shall.** Not merely a permission legalising, but an imperative command enjoining, capital punishment, the reason for which follows. **For in the image of God made he man.** To apply this to the magistracy (Bush, Murphy, Keil), who are sometimes in Scripture styled Elohim (Ps. lxxxii. 6), and the ministers of God (Rom. xiii. 4), and who may be said to have been made in the Divine image in the sense of being endowed with the capacity of ruling and judging, seems forced and unnatural; the clause obviously assigns the original dignity of man (cf. ch. i. 28) as the reason why the murderer cannot be suffered to escape (Calvin, Poole, Alford, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Candlish, Lange)

Ver. 7.—**And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.** *Vide* on ver. 1.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—7.—*New arrangements for a new era.* I. PROVISION FOR THE INCREASE OF THE HUMAN FAMILY. 1. *The proximate instrumentality* — the ordinance of marriage (vers. 1, 7), which was — (1) A *Divine* institution appointed by God in Eden (cf. ch. ii. 22, and Matt. xix. 5). (2) A *sacred* institution. Every ordinance of God's appointment, it may be said, is in a manner holy; but a special sanctity attaches to that of marriage. God attested the estimation in which he held it by visiting the world's corruption, which had principally come through its desecration, with the waters of a flood. (3) A *permanent* institution, being the same in its nature, uses, and ends that it had been from the beginning, only modified to suit the changing circumstances of man's condition. Prior to the fall it was exempt from any of those imperfections which in human experience have clung to it ever since. Subsequent to the melancholy entrance of sin, there was superadded to the lot of woman an element of pain and sorrow from which she had been previously free; and though anterior to the Flood it had been grossly abused by man's licentiousness, after it, we cannot doubt, it was restored in all its original purity, though still with the curse of sorrow unremoved. 2. *The originating cause*—the Divine blessing (vers. 1, 7), without which—(1) *The marriage bed would not be fruitful* (Ps. cxxvii. 3). Cf. the case of Rachel (ch. xxx. 2), of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 11), of Ruth (Ruth iv. 13). (2) *The married life would not be holy.* What marriage is and leads to when dissociated from the fear of God had already been significantly displayed upon the theatre of the antediluvian world, and is abundantly declared in Scripture, both by precept (ch. xxiv. 3; xxviii. 1; Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3, 4; Josh. xxiii. 12, 13; 2 Cor. vi. 14) and example; *e. g.*, the Israelites (Judges iii. 6, 7), Samson (Judges xiv. 1—16), Solomon (1 Kings iii. 1), Jews (Ezra ix. 1—12). (3) *The marriage tie would not be sure.* As ungodliness tends to violate the marriage law by sins of polygamy, so, without the fear of God, there is no absolute security that the bond may not be broken by adultery and divorce (cf. ch. xix. 5, 8; xxxv. 22; 2 Sam. xi. 1—5; Mark vi. 17, 18).

II. PROVISION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN FAMILY. 1. Against *the world of animals.* (1) In Eden such protection was *not required*, man having been constituted lord of the inferior creation, and the beasts of the field never rising to dispute his authority, his rule being characterised by gentleness and love (ch. ii. 20). (2) After the fall such protection was *incomplete.* A change having passed upon the master, there is reason to suppose that a corresponding change transpired upon the servant. The moral order of the world having been dislocated, a like instability would doubtless invade those economical arrangements that depended on man for

their successful administration. As man sank deeper into the mire of corruption, his supremacy over the beasts of the field would appear to have been more frequently and fiercely disputed (ch. vi. 11). But now, the Flood having washed away the sinning race, (3) such protection was henceforth to be rendered *secure* by imbuing the brute nature with an instinctive dread of man which would lead the animals to acknowledge his supremacy, and rather flee from his presence than assail his dominion. The operation of this law is proved to-day by the facts that man retains unquestioned his lordship over all those domesticated animals that are useful to him; that there is no creature, however wild and ferocious, that he cannot tame; and that wherever man appears with his civilising agencies the wild beast instinctively retires. 2. Against *the world of men.* Ever since the fall man has required to be protected against himself. Prior to the Flood it does not appear that even crimes of murder and bloodshed were publicly avenged. Now, however, the previous laxness, if it was such, and not rather Divine clemency, was to cease, and an entirely new arrangement to come into operation. (1) The *law* was henceforth to inflict CAPITAL PUNISHMENT on its murderers; not the law of man simply, but the law of God. Given to Noah, this statute was designed for the universal family of man until repealed by the Authority that imposed it. Not having been exclusively a Jewish statute, the abrogation of the Mosaic economy does not affect its stability. Christ, having come not to destroy the fundamental laws of Heaven, may be fairly presumed to have left this standing. Inferences from the spirit of Christianity have no validity as against an express Divine commandment. (2) The *reasons* for the law were to be the essential dignity of man's nature (ver. 6; cf. homily on the greatness of man, ch. i. 26) and the fundamental brotherhood of the race (ver. 5), a point which appears not to have received sufficient prominence in prediluvian times (cf. Acts xvii. 26). (3) The *execution* of the law was neither to be retained in the Divine hand for miraculous administration, nor to be left in that of the private individual (the kinsman) to gratify revenge, but to be intrusted to society for enforcement by means of a properly-constituted tribunal. This was the commencement of social government among men, and the institution of the magisterial office, or the power of the sword (*vide* Rom. xiii. 1—5).

III. PROVISION FOR THE SUSTENANCE OF THE HUMAN FAMILY. 1. The *rule.* It is not certain that animal food was interdicted in Eden; it is almost certain that it was in use between the fall and the Flood. At the commencement of the new era it was expressly sanctioned. 2. The *restriction.* While the flesh of animals might be used as food, they were not to be mutilated while alive, nor was the blood to be eaten with the flesh. Note the bearing of the first of these on the question of vivisection, which the Divine law appears explicitly to forbid, except it can be proved to be indispensable for the advancement of medical knowledge with a view to the healing of disease, and, in the case of extending a permission, imperatively requires to be carried on with the least possible infliction of pain upon the unresisting creature whose life is thus sacrificed for the good of man; and of the second of these, on the lawfulness of eating blood under the Christian dispensation, see Expos. on ver. 4. 3. The *reason.* (1) For the rule, which, though not stated, may be judged to have been (*a*) a concession to the moral weakness of man's soul, and (*b*) a provision for the physical infirmity of man's body. (2) For the restriction—(*a*) to prevent cruelty to animals; (*b*) to fence about man's life by showing the criminality of destroying that of the beast; (*c*) to assert God's lordship over all life; (*d*) because of its symbolic value as the sign of atoning blood.

Lessons:—1. God's clemency towards man. 2. God's care for man. 3. God's goodness to man. 4. God's estimate of man.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—7.—*The new life of man on the earth* under a new revelation of the Divine favour. The chief points are—

I. UNLIMITED POSSESSION OF THE EARTH, and use of its inhabitants and products, whether for food or otherwise; thus supplying—1. The scope of life. 2. The enjoyment of life. 3. The development of life.

II. Absolute RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE, and preservation of the gentler feelings (the blood being forbidden as injurious to man in this case), promoting—1. The supremacy of the higher nature over the lower. 2. The revelation of the ethical law. 3. The preparation of the heart for Divine communications.

III. Man living in BROTHERHOOD, (1) revealing the image of God, (2) observing God's law, (3) rejoicing in his blessing, he shall multiply and fill the earth. The earth waits for such inhabitants; already by Divine judgments prepared for them.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 8.—**And God spake**—in continuation of the preceding discourse—**unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying.**

Ver. 9.—**And I, behold, I establish**—literally, *am causing to rise up or stand; ἀνίστημι* (LXX.)—**my covenant** (cf. ch. vi. 18) **with you, and with your seed after you.** *I. e.* the covenant contemplated all subsequent posterity in its provisions, and, along with the human family, the entire animal creation.

Ver. 10.—**And with every living creature**—literally, *every soul* (or breathing thing) *that liveth*, a generic designation of which the particulars are now specified—**that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth**—literally, *in fowl*, &c.; *i. e.* belonging to these classes of animals (cf. ch. i. 25, 30; vi. 20; viii. 17)—**with you; from all that go out of the ark,**—not necessarily implying ('Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy), though in all probability it was the case, that there were animals which had never been in the ark; but simply an idiomatic phrase expressive of the totality of the animal creation (Alford)—**to every beast of the earth.** *I. e.* wild beast (ch. i. 25), the chayyah of the land, which was not included among the animals that entered the ark (Murphy); or living creature (ch. ii. 19), referring here to the fishes of the sea, which were not included in the ark (Kalisch). That the entire brute creation was designed to be embraced in the Noachic covenant seems apparent from the use of the prepositions—בְּ describing the classes to which the animals belong, as in ch. vii. 21; מִן indicating one portion of the whole, the *terminus a quo*, and לְ the *terminus ad quem*—in their enumeration (*vide* Fürst, 'Hebrew Lex.,' sub לְ, p. 715; cf. Keil *in loco*). Kalisch thinks the language applies only to the animals of Noah's time, and not to those of a later age, on the ground that "the destiny of the animals is everywhere connected with that of the human race;" but this is equivalent to their being included in the covenant.

Ver. 11.—**And I will establish my covenant with you.** Not form it for the first time, as if no such covenant had existed in antediluvian times (Knobel); but cause it to stand or permanently establish it, so that it shall no more be in danger of being overthrown, as it recently has been. The word "my" points to a covenant already in existence, though not formally mentioned until the time of Noah (ch. vi. 18). The promise of the woman's seed, which formed the substance of the covenant during the interval from Adam to Noah, was from Noah's time downwards to be enlarged by a specific pledge of the stability of the earth and the safety of man (cf. ch. viii. 22). **Neither shall all flesh**—including the human race and the animal creation. Cf. כָּל־בָּשָׂר, mankind (ch. vi 12), the lower creatures (ch. vii. 21)—**be cut off any more by the waters of a flood.** Literally, *the* flood just passed, which would no more return. **Neither shall there any more be a flood** (of any kind) **to destroy the earth.** Regions might be devastated and tribes of animals and men swept away, but never again would there be a universal destruction of the earth or of man.

Ver. 12.—**And God said, This is the token**—אוֹת (*vide* ch. i. 14; iv. 15)—**of the covenant which I make**—literally, *am giving* (cf. ch. xvii. 2)—**between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations.** *Le'dôrôth* (*vide* ch. vi. 9); *'ôlam* (from *'alam*, to hide, to conceal), pr. *that which is hidden;* hence, specially, time of which either the beginning or the end is uncertain or undefined, the duration being usually determined by the nature of the case (*vide* Gesenius, 'Heb. Lex.,' *sub voce*). Here the meaning is, that so long as there were circuits or generations of men upon the earth, so long would this covenant endure.

Ver. 13.—**I do set** Literally, *I have given, or placed*, an indication that the atmospheric phenomenon referred to had already frequently appeared (Syriac, Arabic, Aben Ezra, Chrysostom, Calvin, Willet, Murphy, Wordsworth, Kalisch, Lange). The contrary opinion has been maintained that it now for the first time appeared (Bush, Keil, Delitzsch), or at least that the historian thought so (Knobel); but unless there had been no rain, or the laws of light and the

atmospheric conditions of the earth had been different from what they are at present, it must have been a frequent spectacle in the primeval heavens. **My bow.** *I. e.* the rainbow, τόξον (LXX.), (cf. Ezek. i. 28). The ordinary rainbow consists of a series of successive zones or bands of polarised light, forming little concentric circles in the sky, and having a common centre almost always below the horizon, and diametrically opposite to the sun. It is produced by the refraction and reflection of the sun's light through the spherical raindrops on which the rays fall, and, accordingly, must always appear, with a greater or a lesser degree of visibility, when the two material agencies come in contact. The part of the sky on which the rainbow is thrown is much more bright within than without the bow. The outer space is dark, almost black; and the inner space, on the contrary, melts into the violet almost insensibly (Nichol's 'Cyclopedia of the Sciences,' art. Rainbow). It is here styled God's bow, as being his workmanship (cf. Ecclus. xliii. 12), and his seal appended to his covenant (ch. ix. 17). **In the cloud.** עָנָן, *that which veils the heavens*, from a root signifying to cover (Gesenius). **And it shall be for a token.** לְאוֹת = εἰς σημεῖον (LXX.). In Greek mythology the rainbow is designated by a name (Iris) which is at least connected with εἴρω, to speak, and εἰρήνη, peace; is represented as the daughter of Thaumas (wonder), and Electra (brightness) the daughter of Oceanus; is assigned the office of messenger to the king and queen of Olympus; and is depicted as set in heaven for a sign (Homer, 'Il.,' xi. 27; xvii. 547, 548; xxiv. 144, 159; Virgil, 'Æn.,' iv. 694; v. 606; Ovid, 'Met.,' i. 270; xi. 585). The Persians seem to have associated the rainbow with similar ideas. An old picture, mentioned by Stolberg, represents a winged boy on a rainbow with an old man kneeling in a posture of worship. The Hindoos describe the rainbow as a warlike weapon in the hands of Indras their god, "with which he hurls flashing darts upon the impious giants;" but also as a symbol of peace exhibited to man "when the combat of the heavens is silenced." By the Chinese it is regarded as the harbinger of troubles and misfortunes on earth, and by the old Scandinavians as a bridge uniting earth and heaven ('Kalisch on Genesis,' pp. 223, 224). Traditional reflections of the Biblical narrative, they do not "account for the application in the Pentateuch of the rainbow to a very remarkable purpose," or "explain why the New Testament represents the rainbow as an attribute of the Divine throne," or "why angels are sent as messengers on earth" (Kalisch); but are themselves accounted for and explained by it. The institution of the rainbow as a sign clearly negatives the idea (Aquinas, Cajetan) that it was originally and naturally a sign; which, if it was, "it was a lying sign," since the Flood came notwithstanding its prognostications (Willet). **Of a covenant.** "The bow in the hands of man was an instrument of battle (ch. xlviii. 22; Ps. vii. 12; Prov. vi. 2; Zech. ix. 10); but the bow bent by the hand of God has become a symbol of peace" (Wordsworth). **Between me and the earth.**

Ver. 14.—**And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth.** Literally, *in my clouding a cloud*, i. e. gathering clouds, which naturally signify store of rain (1 Kings xviii. 44, 45). Clouds are often used to denote afflictions and dangers (cf. Ezek. xxx. 3, 18; xxxii. 7; xxxiv. 12; Joel ii. 2). **That the bow shall be seen in the cloud.** Literally, *and the bow is seen*, which it always is when the sun's rays fall upon it, if the spectator's back is towards the light, and his face towards the cloud. Thus at the moment when danger seems to threaten most, the many-coloured arch arrests the gaze.

Ver. 15.—**And I will remember** (cf. ch. viii. 1). An anthropomorphism introduced to remind man that God is ever faithful to his covenant engagements (Calvin). "God is said to remember, because he maketh us to know and to remember" (Chrysostom). **My covenant** (*vide* on ver. 11), **which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood**—*hayah* with *le* = to become (cf. ch. ii. 7); literally, *shall no more be* (*i. e.* grow) to a flood; or, "and there shall no more be the waters to the extent of a flood"—**to destroy all flesh.**

Ver. 16.—**And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant.** Literally, *the covenant of eternity*. One of those pregnant Scripture sayings that have in them an almost inexhaustible fulness of meaning, which does not at first sight disclose itself to the eye of the unreflecting reader. In so far as the Noachic covenant was simply a promise that there should be no recurrence of a flood, the covenant of eternity had a corresponding limit in its duration to the period of this present terrestrial economy. But, rightly viewed, the Noachic covenant was the original Adamic covenant set up again in a different form; and hence, when applied to it, the phrase **covenant of eternity** is entitled to retain its highest and fullest significance, as a covenant reaching from eternity to eternity. **Between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.**

Ver. 17.—**And God said unto Noah, This**

is the token of the covenant. Murphy thinks that God here directed the patriarch's attention to an actual rainbow; it seems more natural to conclude that from the beginning of the interview (ch. viii. 20) the ark, altar, and worshippers were encircled by its variegated arch. Kalisch compares with the rainbow the other signs which God subsequently appended to his covenants; as, *e. g.*, circumcision (ch. xvii. 11), the passover (Exod. xii. 13), the sabbath (*ibid.* xxxi. 13). The Noachic covenant being universal, the sign was also universal—"τέρας μερόπων ἀνθρώπων" (Il., xi. 27), a sign to men of many tongues. The later covenants being limited to Israel, their signs were local and provisional, and have now been supplanted by the higher symbolism of the Christian Church, viz., baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Christian sabbath. **Which I have established.** The different verbs used in this passage in connection with בְּרִית may be here brought together. 1. נָתַן (ver. 12) representing the covenant as a gift of Divine grace. 2. קוּם (Hiph.; vers. 9, 11, 17) exhibiting the covenant as something which God has both caused to stand and raised up when fallen. 3. זָכַר (ver. 15) depicting the covenant as always present to the Divine mind. Tuch, Stähelin, and Delitzsch detect an idiosyncrasy of the Elohist in using the first and second of these verbs instead of כָּרַת, the favourite expression of the Jehovist. But כָּרַת is used by the Elohist in ch. xxi. 27, 32, while in Deut. iv. 18 the Jehovist uses הֵקִים. **Between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 16.—*The covenant renewed.* I. THE AUTHOR OF THE COVENANT. God. This is evident from the nature of the case. In ordinary language a covenant signifies "a mutual contract between two (or more) parties" (Hodge, 'Syst. Theol.,' vol. ii. p. 355); cf. ch. xxi. 27 (Abraham and Abimelech); Josh. xxiv. 25 (Joshua and Israel); 1 Sam. xviii. 3 (Jonathan and David); 1 Kings xx. 34 (Ahab and Benhadad); "comprehending a promise made by the one to the other, accompanied with a condition, upon the performance of which the accepter becomes entitled to the fulfilment of the promise" (Dick's 'Theol. Lect.,' xlv.). Applied, however, to those transactions between God and man which took their rise subsequent to the fall, a covenant is an arrangement or disposition originated by God under which certain free and gracious promises are made over to man, which promises are ratified by sacrifice and impose certain obligations on their recipients, while they are usually connected with institutions illustrative of their nature (cf. 'Kelly on the Covenants,' lect. i. p. 12). But, taking either definition of the term, it is obvious that the initial movement in any such transaction must belong to God; and with special emphasis does God claim to be the sole Author of the covenant established with Noah and his descendants (vers. 9, 11, 12, 17).

II. THE PARTIES TO THE COVENANT, *i. e.* the persons interested in the covenant; viz., Noah and his posterity. But Noah and his sons at that time were—1. *The heads of the race.* Hence the covenant may be said to have possessed a world-wide aspect. Because of their connection with Noah the entire family of man had an interest in its provisions. 2. *The fathers of the Church.* As believers Noah and his family had been saved; and with them, in the character of believers, the covenant was made. Hence it had also a special outlook to the Church, for whom it had a blessing quite distinct from that which it conferred upon the world as such.

III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE COVENANT. Calling it so frequently as he does "my covenant" (ch. vi. 18; vii. 9, 11), the Author of it seems desirous to connect it in our thoughts with that old covenant which, more than sixteen centuries earlier, he had established with mankind immediately after the fall. Now that covenant was in substance an arrangement, disposition, proposal, or promise of mercy and salvation; and that has been the essential element in every covenant that God has made with man. So to speak, God's covenant is just another name for his formal conveyance to mankind sinners of the free gift of Christ and his salvation.

IV. THE FORM OF THE COVENANT. While in every age essentially the same, the form of the covenant has been changing with the changing eras of human history. When we speak of a change of dispensation, the thing meant is a change upon the outward form or mode of representing the covenant—a dispensation being a Divine

arrangement for communicating blessing. In prediluvian times the form which the covenant assumed was the promise of the woman's seed. From the Deluge onwards it was a promise of forbearance—"Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth." In the patriarchal era it became the promise of a son "in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed" (ch. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18). Under the Mosaic dispensation the promise of a prophet like unto Moses (Deut. xviii. 15); during the monarchy the promise of a king to sit upon David's throne (2 Sam. vii. 12); in the time of Isaiah the promise of a suffering servant of the Lord (Isa. xlii., liii.); in the fulness of the times it assumed its permanent form, viz., that of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the woman's seed, as Abraham's child, as David's son, as Jehovah's servant.

V. THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT. Covenant transactions under the old or Levitical dispensation were invariably accompanied with the offering up of sacrificial victims, as a public attestation of the binding character of the arrangement. The covenant which God made with Noah had also its sacrificial seal. 1. *The meritorious sacrifice.* The propitiatory offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the sole ground of which he is well pleased with and mercifully disposed towards the race of sinful man. 2. *The typical sacrifice.* The offering of Noah upon Ararat after emerging from the ark.

VI. THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT. The rainbow, which was—1. A *universal* sign. The covenant having been made with the entire family of man, it was in a manner requisite that the sign should be one which was patent to the race; not limited and local and national, like circumcision, afterwards given to the Hebrews or Abrahamidæ, but universal, ubiquitous, cosmopolitan; and such was the rainbow. This was a first mark of kindness on the part of God towards the family which he had taken into covenant with himself. 2. An *attractive* sign. Such as could not fail to arrest the gaze of those whose special interest it was to behold it. Nothing is more remarkable than the quickness with which it attracts the eye, and the pleasurable feelings which its sight enkindles. In its selection, then, to be a sign and symbol of his covenant, instead of something in itself repulsive or even indifferent, we can detect another proof of kindness on the part of God. 3. A *seasonable* sign. At the very moment, as it were, when nature's elements are threatening another deluge, the signal of heaven's clemency is hung out upon the watery sky to rebuke the fears of men. Another token of special kindness on the part of God. 4. A *suggestive* sign—suggestive of the covenant of grace. Possibly this was the chief reason why the rainbow was selected as the sign of the covenant; a further display of kindness on the part of God.

VII. THE PERPETUITY OF THE COVENANT. 1. *To eternity* (ver. 16). In so far as it was a spiritual covenant with the believing Church, it was designed to be unto, as it had actually been from, everlasting. 2. *For perpetual generations* (ver. 12). In so far as it was a providential covenant with the race, it was designed to continue to the end of time.

Lessons:—1. The exceeding riches of Divine grace in dealing with men by way of a covenant. 2. The exceeding faithfulness of God in adhering to his covenant, notwithstanding man's sinfulness and provocation. 3. The exceeding hopefulness of man's position in being placed beneath a covenant of mercy.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 8—17.—*The new Noachic covenant established.* I. It is a COVENANT OF LIFE. It embraces all the posterity of Noah, *i. e.* it is—1. *The new foundation* on which humanity rests. 2. It passes through man *to all flesh*, to all living creatures. 3. The sign of it, *the rainbow in the cloud*, is also the emblem of the *salvation* which may be said to be typified in the deliverance of Noah and his family. 4. The background is the same element wherewith the world was destroyed, representing *the righteousness of God* as against the sin of man. *On that righteousness God sets the sign of love*, which is produced by the rays of light—the sun being the emblem of Divine goodness—radiating from the infinite centre in the glorious Father of all.

"*And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.*"

II. GOD'S REVELATION SET BEFORE OUR FAITH. 1. It is *waiting to be recognised.* When we place ourselves in *right relation* to the revelations and promises of Jehovah we can always see the bow on the cloud of sense, on events—*bright* compassion on the *darkest* providence. 2. There is an *interdependence* between the *objective* and *subjective.* The rainbow is the natural result of an adjustment between the sun, the earth, the cloud falling in rain, and man, the beholder. Take *the earth* to represent the abiding laws of man's nature and God's righteousness, *the falling cloud* to represent the condemnation and punishment of human sin, *the sun* the revealed love and mercy of God sending forth its beams in the midst of the dispensation of judgment; then let there be *faith in man* to *look up* and rejoice in that which is set before him, and he will *behold the rainbow of the covenant* even on the very background of the condemnation.

III. TRANSFIGURED RIGHTEOUSNESS IN REDEMPTION. The cross at once condemnation and life. The same righteousness which once destroyed the earth is manifested in Christ Jesus—"*righteousness unto all and upon all them that believe.*"

IV. UNION OF GOD AND MAN. God himself is said to look upon the sign of the covenant that he may *remember.* So *man looking* and *God looking* to the *same pledge* of salvation. "God was in Christ reconciled," &c. Their reconciliation is complete and established.—R.

Ver. 13.—*The bow in the cloud.* With deep joy and yet with awe must Noah have looked around him on leaving the ark. On every side signs of the mighty destruction; the earth scarcely dried, and the busy throng of men (Luke xvii. 27) all gone. Yet signs of new life; the earth putting forth verdure, as though preparing for a new and happier chapter of history. His first recorded act was sacrifice—an acknowledgment that his preserved life was God's gift, a new profession of faith in him. Then God gave the promise that no such destruction should again befall the earth, and so ordered the sign that the rain-cloud which might excite the fear should bring with it the rainbow, the pledge of the covenant. But as ch. vi. 18 foreshadowed the Christian covenant (1 Pet. iii. 21) in its aspect of deliverance from destruction, the text points to the same in its bearing on daily life and service. The Godward life and renewal of the will which the law could not produce (Rom. viii. 3) is made sure to believers through the constraining power of the love of Christ (cf. 1 John iii. 3; Rev. xii. 11). And if clouds should cause fear, and God's face be hidden, and the energy of dedication grow languid, we are reminded (Rom. vi. 14; Gal. v. 24). And in the vision of the glorified Church (Rev. iv. 3) the rainbow again appears, pointing back to the early sign, connecting them as parts of one scheme, and visibly setting forth the glory of God in his mercy and grace (cf. Exod. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 6; John i. 14).

I. THE COVENANT WAS MADE WITH NOAH AND HIS SEED AS CHILDREN OF FAITH. They had believed in God's revealed way of salvation and entered the ark (cf. Num. xxi. 8). The root of a Christian life is belief in a finished redemption (2 Cor. v. 14; 1 John v. 11); not belief that the doctrine is true, but trust in the fact as the one ground of hope. Hast thou acted on God's call; entered the ark; trusted Christ; none else, nothing else? Waitest thou for something in thyself? Noah did not think of fitness when told to enter. God calleth thee as unfit (cf. 1 Tim. i. 15). Try to believe; make a real effort (cf. Matt. xv. 28; Mark ix. 23).

II. THE POWER OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE; FAITH AS A HABIT OF THE MIND. Look to the bow. "Looking unto Jesus." The world is the field on which God's grace is shown; we are the actors by whom his work is done. How shall we do this? Beset by hindrances—love of the world, love of self, love of ease. We cannot of ourselves (cf. Luke xxii. 33, 34; Rom. xi. 20). We are strong only in trusting to the power of the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. iv. 13).

III. IN THIS THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER. His office is to reveal Christ to the soul. His help is promised if sought for.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 18.—**And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth,** who are here again mentioned as the heads of the nations into which the family of man developed, the writer having described the important modifications made upon the law of nature and the covenant of grace, and being now about to proceed with the onward course of human history. The present section, extending to ver. 27, is usually assigned to the Jehovistic author (Tuch, Bleek, Kalisch, Colenso, Kuenen), though by Davidson it is ascribed to a so-called redactor, with the exception of the present clause, which is recognised as the Jehovist's contribution to the story. The ground of this apportionment is the introduction of the name Jehovah in ver. 26 (*q. v.*), and certain traces throughout the paragraph of the style of writing supposed to be peculiar to the supplementer. **And Ham is the father of Canaan.** *Kena'an*, the depressed or low one; either the Lowlander or inhabitant of a low coast country, as opposed to the loftier regions (Aram); from *kana'*, to be low, depressed, in situation, as of land (Gesenius); or more probably the servile one in spirit (Fürst, Murphy, Keil, Lange). The reason for the insertion of this notice here, and of the similar one in ver. 22, was obviously to draw attention to the circumstance, not "that the origin of Israel's ascendancy and of Canaan's degradation dates so far back as the family of the second founder of the human race," as if the writer's standpoint were long subsequent to the conquest (Kalisch), but that, "as Israel was now going to possess the land of Canaan, they might know that now was the time when the curse of Canaan and his posterity should take place" (Willet).

Ver. 19.—**These are the three sons of Noah; and of them was the whole earth**—*i. e.* the earth's population (cf. ch. xi. 1; xix. 31)—**overspread.** More correctly, *dispersed themselves abroad.* Διεσπάρησαν ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν (LXX.); *disseminatum est omne genus hominum* (Vulgate).

Ver. 20.—**And Noah began** to be **an husbandman.** Literally, *a man of the ground. Vir terræ* (Vulgate); ἄνθρωπος γεωργὸς γῆς (LXX.); Chald., גְּבַר פָּלַח בְּאַרְעָא = *vir colens terram; agriculturæ dediturus.* Cf. Josh. v. 4, "a man of war;" 2 Sam. xvi. 7, "a man of blood;" Gen. xlvi. 32, "a man of cattle;" Exod. iv. 10, "a man of words." **And he planted a vineyard.** So Murphy, Wordsworth, Kalisch. Keil, Delitzsch, and Lange regard *ish ha' Adamah*, with the art., as in apposition to Noah, and read, "And Noah, the husbandman, began and planted a vineyard," i. e. *cœpit plantare* (cf. Gesenius, 'Gram.,' § 142, 3; Glass, 'Sacræ Philologiæ,' lib. iii. tr iii. can. 34). Neither interpretation presupposes that husbandry and vine cultivation were now practised for the first time. That Armenia is a wine-growing country is testified by Xenophon ('Anab.,' iv. 4, 9). That the vine was abundantly cultivated in Egypt is evident from representations on the monuments, as well as from Scriptural allusions. The Egyptians say that Osiris, the Greeks that Dionysus, the Romans that Saturn, first taught men the cultivation of the tree and the use of its fruit.

Ver. 21.—**And he drank of the wine.** יַיִן; "perhaps so called from bubbling up and fermenting;" connected with יָוַן (Gesenius). Though the first mention of wine in Scripture, it is scarcely probable that the natural process of fermentation for so many centuries escaped the notice of the enterprising Cainites, or even of the Sethites; that, "though grapes had been in use before this, wine had not been extracted from them" (Murphy); or that Noah was unacquainted with the nature and effects of this intoxicating liquor (Chrysostom, Theodoret, Keil, Lange). The article before יַיִן indicates that the patriarch was "familiar with the use and treatment" of the grape (Kalisch); and Moses does not say this was the first occasion on which the patriarch tasted the fermented liquor (Calvin, Wordsworth). **And was drunken.** The verb שָׁכַר (whence *shechar*, strong drink, Num. xxviii. 7), to drink to the full, very often signifies to make oneself drunken, or simply to be intoxicated as the result of drinking; and that which the Holy Spirit here reprobates is not the partaking of the fruit of the vine, but the drinking so as to be intoxicated thereby. Since the sin of Noah cannot be ascribed to ignorance, it is perhaps right, as well as charitable, to attribute it to age and inadvertence. Six hundred years old at the time of the Flood, he must have been considerably beyond this when Ham saw him overtaken in his fault, since Canaan was Ham's fourth son (ch. x. 6), and the first was not born till after the exit from the ark (ch. viii. 18). But from whatever cause induced, the drunkenness of Noah was not entirely guiltless; it was sinful in itself, and led to further shame. **And he was uncovered.** Literally, *he uncovered himself.* Hithpael of גָּלָה, to make naked, which more correctly indicates the personal guilt of the patriarch than the A. V., or the LXX., ἐγυμνώθη. That intoxication tends to sensuality,

cf. the cases of Lot (ch. xix. 33), Ahasuerus (Esther i. 10, 11), Belshazzar (Dan. v. 1—6). **Within his tent.** *'Εν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ* (LXX.).

Ver. 22.—**And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness.** *Pudenda*, from a root (עָרָה) signifying to make naked, from a kindred root to which (עָרַם) comes the term expressive of the nakedness of Adam and Eve after eating the forbidden fruit (ch. iii. 7). The sin of Ham—not a "trifling and unintentional transgression" (Von Bohlen)—obviously lay not in seeing what perhaps he may have come upon unexpectedly, but (1) in wickedly rejoicing in what he saw, which, considering who he was that was overcome with wine,—"the minister of salvation to men, and the chief restorer of the world,"—the relation in which he stood to Ham,—that of father,—the advanced age to which he had now come, and the comparatively mature years of Ham himself, who was "already more than a hundred years old," should have filled him with sincere sorrow; "sed nunquam vino victum patrem filius risisset, nisi prius ejecisset animo illam reverentiam et opinionem, quæ in liberis de parentibus ex mandato Dei existere debet" (Luther); and (2) in reporting it, doubtless with a malicious purpose, to his brethren. **And told his two brethren without.** Possibly inviting them to come and look upon their father's shame.

Ver. 23.—**And Shem and Japheth took a garment.** Literally, *the robe*, i. e. which was at hand (Keil, Lange); the *simlah*, which was an outer cloak (Deut. x. 18; 1 Sam. xxi. 10; Isa. iii. 6, 7), in which, at night, persons wrapped themselves (Deut. xxii. 17). Sometimes the letters are transposed, and the word becomes *salmah* (cf. Exod. xxii. 8; Micah ii. 8). **And laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backwards, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not the nakedness of their father**; thereby evincing "the regard they paid to their father's honour and their own modesty" (Calvin).

Ver. 24.—**And Noah awoke from his wine.** *I.e.* the effects of his wine (cf. 1 Sam. i. 14; xxv. 37); *ἐξένηψε* (LXX.); "became fully conscious of his condition" (T. Lewis). **And knew.** By inspiration (Alford); more probably by making inquiries as to the reason of the simlah covering him. **What his younger son.** Literally, *his son, the little one*, i. e. the youngest son (Willet, Murphy, Wordsworth, T. Lewis, Alford, Candlish), or the younger son (Keil, Bush, Kalisch); cf. ch. v. 32. Generally believed to have been Ham, though by many Canaan is understood (Aben Ezra, Theodoret, Procopius, Scaliger, Poole, Jamieson, Inglis, Lewis). Origen mentions a tradition that Canaan first saw the shame of Noah, and told it to his father. Wordsworth, following Chrysostom, believes Canaan may have been an accomplice. 'The Speaker's Commentary' thinks it would solve the difficulty which attaches to the cursing of Canaan.

Ver. 25.—**And he said.** Not in personal resentment, since "the fall of Noah is not at all connected with his prophecy, except as serving to bring out the real character of his children, and to reconcile him to the different destinies which he was to announce as awaiting their respective races" (Candlish); but under the impulse of a prophetic spirit (Poole, Keil, Lange, Candlish, Murphy, and expositors generally), which, however, had its historical occasion in the foregoing incident. The structure of the prophecy is perfectly symmetrical, introducing, in three poetical verses, (1) the curse of Canaan, (2) the blessing of Shem, and (3) the enlargement of Japheth, and in all three giving prominence to the doom of servitude pronounced upon the son of Ham. **Cursed.** The second curse pronounced upon a human being, the first having been on Cain (ch. iv. 11). Colenso notices that all the curses belong to the Jehovistic writer; but *vide* ch. xlix. 6, 7, which Tuch and Bleek ascribed to the Elohist, though, doubtless in consequence of the "curse," by Davidson and others it is now assigned to the Jehovist. That this curse was not an imprecation, but a prediction of the future subjection of the Canaanites, has been maintained (Theodoret, Venema, Willet), chiefly in consequence of its falling upon Canaan; but (1) as the contrary "blessing" implies the inheritance of good in virtue of a Divine disposition to that effect, so does "cursing" import subjection to evil by the same Divine power; and (2) if we eliminate the moral element from the doom of Canaan, which clearly referred to a condition of temporal servitude, there seems no reason why the language of Noah should not be regarded as a solemnly pronounced and Divinely guaranteed infliction; while (3) as the curse is obviously aimed at the nations and peoples descending from the execrated person, it is not inconsistent to suppose that many individuals amongst those nations and peoples might attain to a high degree of temporal and spiritual prosperity. **Be Canaan.** (1) Not Ham, the father of Canaan (Arabic Version); nor (2) all the sons of Ham, though concentrated in Canaan (Hävernick, Keil, Murphy); but (3) Canaan alone, though indirectly, through him, Ham also (Calvin, Bush, Kalisch, Lange, *et alii*). For the formal omission of Ham many different reasons have been assigned. (1) Because God had preserved him in the ark (Jewish commentators). (2) Because if Ham had

been mentioned all his other sons would have been implicated (Pererius, Lange). (3) Because the sin of Ham was comparatively trifling (Bohlen). For the cursing of Canaan instead of Ham, it has been urged — (1) That he was Ham's youngest son, as Ham was Noah's (Hoffman and Delitzsch); surely a very insufficient reason for God cursing any one! (2) That he was the real perpetrator of the crime (Aben Ezra, Procopius, Poole, Jamieson, Lewis, &c.). (3) That thereby the greatness of Ham's sin was evinced (Calvin). (4) That Canaan was already walking in the steps of his father's impiety (Ambrose, Mercerus, Keil). (5) That Noah foresaw that the Canaanites would abundantly deserve this visitation (Calvin, Wordsworth, Murphy, Kalisch, Lange). We incline to think the truth lies in the last three reasons. **A servant of servants.** A Hebraism for the superlative degree; cf. "King of kings," "holy of holies," "the song of songs" (*vide* Gesenius, § 119). *I. e.* "the last even among servants" (Calvin); "a servant reduced to the lowest degree of bondage and degradation" (Bush); "vilissima servitute pressus" (Sol. Glass); "a most base and vile servant" (Ainsworth); "a working servant" (Chaldee); "the lowest of slaves" (Keil); *παῖς οἰκέτης* (LXX.), which "conveys the notion of permanent hereditary servitude" (Kalisch). Keil, Hengstenberg, and Wordsworth see an allusion to this condition in the name Canaan (*q. v.*, *supra*), which, however, Lange doubts. **Shall he be to his brethren.** A prophecy which was afterwards abundantly fulfilled, the Canaanites in the time of Joshua having been partly exterminated and partly reduced to the lowest form of slavery by the Israelites who belonged to the family of Shem (Josh. ix. 23), those that remained being subsequently reduced by Solomon (1 Kings ix. 20, 21); while the Phenicians, along with the Carthaginians and Egyptians, who all belonged to the family of Canaan, were subjected by the Japhetic Persians, Macedonians, and Romans (Keil).

Ver. 26.—**And he said**—not "Blessed of Jehovah, my God, be Shem" (Jamieson), as might have been anticipated (this, equally with the omission of Ham's name, lifts the entire patriarchal utterance out of the region of mere personal feeling), but—**Blessed**—בָּרוּךְ when applied to God signifies an ascription of praise (cf. Ps. cxliv. 15; Ephes. i. 3); when applied to man, an invocation of good (cf. ch. xiv. 19, 20; Ps. cxxviii. 1; Heb. vii. 6)—be **the Lord God**—literally, *Jehovah, Elohim of Shem* (cf. ch. xxiv. 27); *Jehovah* being the proper personal name of God, of whom it is predicated that he is the Elohim of Shem; equivalent to a statement not simply that Shem should enjoy "a rare and transcendent," "Divine or heavenly," blessing (Calvin), or "a most abundant blessing, reaching its highest point in the promised Seed" (Luther); but that Jehovah, the one living and true God, should be his God, and that the knowledge and practice of the true religion should continue among his descendants, with, perhaps, a hint that the promised Seed should spring from his loins (Œcolampadius, Willet, Murphy, Keil, &c.)—**of Shem.** In the name Shem (name, renown) there may lie an allusion to the spiritual exaltation and advancement of the Semitic nations (*vide* ch. v. 32). **And Canaan shall be his servant.** לָמוֹ = לָהֶם (Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic), *i. e.* the two brothers (Delitzsch), their descendants (Knobel, Keil), Shem and Jehovah (Bush); or more probably = לוֹ, as a collective singular (cf. Gesenius, § 103, 2), *i. e.* Shem, including his descendants (LXX., *αὐτοῦ*; Kalisch, Lange, Murphy).

Ver. 27.—**God.** *Elohim.* If vers. 18—27 are Jehovistic (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, *et alii*), why Elohim? Is this a proof that the Jehovistic document was revised by the Elohistic author, as the presence of Jehovah in any so-called Elohistic section is regarded as an interpolation by the supplementer? To obviate this inference Davidson assigns vers. 20—27 to his redactor. But the change of name is sufficiently explained when we remember that "Jehovah, as such, never was the God of Japheth's descendants, and that the expression would have been as manifestly improper if applied to him as it is in its proper place applied to Shem" (Quarry, p. 393). **Shall enlarge Japheth.** יַפְתְּ לְיֶפֶת; literally, *shall enlarge or make room for the one that spreads abroad;* or, "may God concede an ample space to Japheth" (Gesenius). "Wide let God make it for Japheth" (Keil). "God give enlargement to Japheth" (Lange). So LXX., Vulgate, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic. The words form a paronomasia, — both the verb and the noun being connected with the root פָּתָה, to spread abroad; Hiph., to cause to lie open, hence to make room for,—and refer to the widespread diffusion and remarkable prosperity of the Japhetic nations. The familiar interpretation which renders "God will persuade Japheth, the persuadible," *i. e.* incline his heart by the gospel so that he may dwell in the tents of Shem (Junius, Vatablus, Calvin, Willet, Ainsworth), is discredited by the facts (1) that the verb never means to persuade, except in a bad sense (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 20), and (2) that in this sense it is never followed by לְ, but always by the accusative (*vide* Gesenius, *sub. nom.*; cf.

Bush, p. 109). The fulfilment of the prophecy is apparent from the circumstance that "præter Europam" (εὐρώπη = wide, extensive) "maximam Asiæ partem, totum demique novum orbem, veluti immensæ magnitudinis auctarium, Japheto posterique ejus in perpetuam possessionem obtigisse" (Fuller, 'Sac. Miscel.,' lib. ii. c. 4, quoted by Glass); cf. ch. x. 2—5, in which Japheth is given as the progenitor of fourteen peoples, to which are added the inhabitants of the lands washed by the sea. The expansive power of Japheth "refers not only to the territory and the multitude of the Japhethites, but also to their intellectual and active faculties. The metaphysics of the Hindoos, the philosophy of the Greeks, the military prowess of the Romans, and the modern science and civilisation of the world are due to the race of Japheth" (Murphy). **And he**—not *Elohim* (Philo., Theodoret, Onkelos, Dathe, Baumgarten, *et alii*), which (1) substantially repeats the blessing already given to Shem, and (2) would introduce an allusion to the superiority of Shem's blessing in what the context requires should be an unrestricted benediction of Japheth; but *Japheth* (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Delitzsch, Keil, Lange, Kalisch, Murphy, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary')—**shall dwell.** יִשְׁכֹּן, from שָׁכַן, to dwell; used of God inhabiting the heavens (Isa. lvii. 15), dwelling in the bush (Deut. xxx. 16), residing, or causing his name to dwell, in the tabernacle (Deut. xii. 11); hence supposed to favour the idea that Elohim is the subject; but it was as Jehovah (not Elohim) that God abode between the cherubim (Exod. xl. 34). **In the tents of Shem.** Not the tents of celebrity (Gesenius, Vater, Michaelis, De Wette, Knobel), but the tents of the Shemitic races, with allusion not to their subjugation by the Japhethites (Clericus, Von Bohlen, Bochart), which would not be in keeping with the former blessing pronounced upon them (Murphy), but to their subsequent contiguity to, and even commingling with, but especially to their participation in the religious privileges of, the Shemites (the Fathers, Targum Jonathan, Hieronymus, Calvin, Keil, Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy, Candlish). The fulfilment of the prophecy is too obvious to call for illustration. **And Canaan shall be his servant.**

Vers. 28, 29.—**And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.** *I. e.* to the fifty-eighth year of the life of Abram, and was thus in all probability a witness of the building of the tower of Babel, and of the consequent dispersion of mankind. **And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.** Tuch, Bleek, and Colenso connect these verses with ver. 17, as the proper continuation of the Elohist's work.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 20—29.—*The future unveiled.* I. A PAGE FROM HUMAN HISTORY. The prominent figure an old man (of 620 years or upwards)—always an object of interest, as one who has passed through life's vicissitudes, and worthy of peculiar honour, especially if found walking in the paths of righteousness and peace; an old saint who had long been distinguished for the elevation of his piety, who had long maintained his fidelity to God in the midst of evil times, who had just enjoyed a special deliverance at the hand of God, and who up to the period referred to in our text had brought neither stain upon his piety nor cloud upon his name; the second head of the human family, and in a manner also the second head of the Church of God; an old disciple, who probably had seen Seth, the son of Adam, and walked with Enoch, and spoken with Methuselah, and who lived, as the Scripture tells us, to the days of Abram; clearly one of the most distinguished figures that, looking back, one is able to detect upon the canvas of time. Well, in connection with this venerable patriarch we learn—1. That *he engaged in a highly honourable occupation.* (1) *It was to his credit that he had an occupation.* Being an old man, he might have reasoned that his working days were done, and that the evening of life might as well be spent in leisure and meditation. Having three stalwart sons, he might have deemed it proper to look to them for aid in his declining years. And knowing himself to be an object of Heaven's peculiar care, he might have trusted God would feed him without his working, since he had saved him without his asking. But from all these temptations—to idleness, to dependence, to presumption—Noah was delivered, and preferred, as all good Christians should do, to labour to the last, working while it is called to-day, to depend upon themselves rather than their friends and neighbours, and to expect God's assistance rather when they try to help themselves than when they leave it all to him. Then, (2) *The calling he engaged in was an honest one.*

He was a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard (*vide* Exposition on vine cultivation). God's people should be careful in selecting honest trades and professions for themselves and their children (Rom. xii. 17). No social status, or public estimation, or profitable returns can render that employment honourable which, either in its nature or in the manner of its carrying on, violates the law of God; while that calling has a special glory in itself and a special value in the sight of Heaven which, however humble and unremunerative, respects the rights of men and the rules of God. 2. That *he indulged in a perfectly legitimate gratification.* "He drank of the wine." There was nothing wrong in Noah eating of the ripe grapes which grew upon his vines, or drinking of their juice when transformed into wine (cf. Deut. xxv. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 7). The sinfulness of making fermented liquors cannot be established so long as fermentation is a natural process for the preservation of the produce of the grape, and Scripture, in one set of passages, speaks of its beneficial influence upon man's physical system (Judges ix. 13; Ps. civ. 15; Prov. xxxi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 23), and God himself employs it as a symbol of the highest and choicest blessings, both temporal and spiritual (Gen. xxvii. 28, 37; Prov. ix. 2; Isa. xxv. 6; Matt. xxvi. 28, 29), and Christ made it at the marriage feast of Cana (John ii. 9, 10). Nor is the drinking of wines and other fermented liquors condemned in Scripture as a violation of the law of God. That there are special seasons when abstinence from this as well as other gratifications of a physical kind is a duty (cf. Levit. x. 9; Judges xiii. 4, 14; Ezek. xliv. 21; Dan. i. 5, 8, 16; Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. x. 28), and that it is competent to any Christian, for the sake of his weaker brethren, or as a means of advancing his own spiritual life, or for the glory of God, to renounce his liberty in respect of drinks, no intelligent person will doubt. But that total abstinence is imperatively required of every one is neither asserted in Scripture nor was it taught by the example of Christ (Matt. xi. 19), and to enforce it upon Christian men as a term of communion is to impose on them a yoke of bondage which Christ has not sanctioned, and to supplant Christian liberty by bodily asceticism. 3. That *he fell beneath a pitifully sad humiliation.* (1) *He drank to the extent of intoxication.* Whatever extenuations may be offered for the action of the patriarch, it cannot be regarded in any other light than a sin. Considering the age he had come to, the experience he had passed through, the position which he occupied as the head of the race and the father of the Church, he ought to have been specially upon his guard. While permitting man a moderate indulgence in the fruit of the vine, the word of God especially condemns the sin of drunkenness (cf. Prov. xxiii. 20; Isa. v. 11, 22; Luke xxi. 34; Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. v. 11; vi. 10; Gal. v. 21; Ephes. v. 18; 1 Thess. v. 8). (2) *His immodesty.* The veil of modesty in which God designs that every sinful human being should be wrapt should be jealously guarded from infringement by any action either of ourselves or others.

Lessons:—1. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12). Remember Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Peter. 2. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephes. v. 18). There is scarcely a sin to which intoxication may not lead; there is no infallible cure for drunkenness but being filled with the Spirit. 3. "Be sure thy sin will find thee out" (Num. xxxii. 23). "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known."

II. A REVELATION OF HUMAN CHARACTER. On the threshold of the new world, like the Lord Jesus Christ in the opening of the gospel dispensation (Luke ii. 35), the patriarch Noah appears to have been set for the fall and rising again of many, and for a sign to be spoken against that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. All unconsciously to him his vine-planting and wine-drinking become the occasion of unveiling the different characters of his sons in respect of—1. *Filial piety*, which Shem and Japheth remarkably displayed, but of which Ham, the youngest son, appears to have been destitute. There was nothing sinful in Ham's having witnessed what should never have been exposed to view, and there is no reason to credit any of the idle rabbinical legends which allege that Ham perpetrated a particular outrage upon his father; but Ham was manifestly wanting in that filial reverence and honour which were due to his aged parent, in that he gazed with delight upon the melancholy spectacle of his father's shame — in singular contrast to the respectful and modest behaviour of Shem and Japheth, who "went

with their faces backward," so that "they saw not their father's nakedness." 2. *Tender charity*. In addition to the mocking eye which gloated over the patriarch's infirmity, there was present in the heart of Ham an evil and malicious spirit, which led him to inflict another and a severer indignity upon his father's fame. The faults of even bad men are required by religion to be covered up rather than paraded in public view. Much more the indiscretions, failings, and sins of good men. Most of all the faults of a father. But, alas, instead of sorrowing for his father's overthrow, Ham obviously took pleasure in it; instead of charitably trying to excuse the old man, nay, without even waiting to ascertain whether an explanation of his conduct might be possible, he appears to have put the worst construction on it; instead of doing what he could to hide his father's sin and shame, he rushes forth and makes it known to his brothers. But these brothers, with another spirit, without offering any apology for their father's error, perhaps instinctively perceiving it to be altogether unjustifiable, take the first loose garment they can find, and, with a beautiful modesty as well as a becoming piety, casting it around their shoulders, enter their father's presence with their faces backward, and cover up his prostrate form. Let the incident remind us—(1) That if nothing can extenuate a father's falling into sin, much more can nothing justify a son for failing in respect towards his father. (2) That it is a sure sign of depravity in a child when he mocks at a parent's infirmities and publishes a parent's faults. (3) That filial piety ever seeks to extenuate and to hide rather than to aggravate and blaze abroad a parent's weaknesses and sins. (4) That children in the same family may be distinguished by widely different dispositions. (5) That a son may have pious parents and experience many providential mercies for their sakes, and yet be at heart a child of the devil. (6) That that which makes one son differ from another in the same family is Divine grace; and (7) that the characters of children, and of men in general, are oftentimes revealed at the most unexpected times, and by the most improbable events.

III. A DISCLOSURE OF HUMAN DESTINY. Awaking from his wine, the patriarch became aware of what had taken place. Discerning in the conduct of his sons an indication of divergence in their characters, recognising in their different characters a repetition of what had taken place at the commencement of the first era of the world's history, viz., the division of mankind into a holy and a wicked line, foreseeing also, through the help of inspiration, the development of the world's population into three different tribes or races, he foretells, acting in all under the Spirit's guidance, the future destinies that should await them. His utterance takes the form of a prediction, in which he declares—1. *The degradation of Canaan*. "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." (1) So far as Ham was concerned this judgment was *severe*, as being imposed upon his youngest and probably his best beloved son; *appropriate*—he for whose sake it had been inflicted having been his father's youngest son; *merciful*, as falling not on all his race, but only upon one son and his descendants. N.B.—God's judgments upon sinful men are always proportioned in severity to the guilt which brings them, adjusted to the natures of the sins for which they come, and mixed with mercy in the experience of the persons on whom they fall. (2) So far as Canaan was concerned the doom of servitude was *sovereignly imposed*. There is no evidence that Canaan was at all connected with the incident that happened in his grandfather's tent. That the penalty of his father's offence was made to fall on him of all his father's sons was in virtue of that high prerogative which belongs to God alone of assigning to men and nations their lots on earth (cf. Ps. lxxv. 7; Isa. xli. 2; Dan. v. 19; iv. 35; Acts xvii. 26). *Richly merited*. Whether Canaan had begun by this time to display any of the dispositions of his father cannot certainly be known; but in after years, when the prophecy was nearing its accomplishment, it is well known that the peculiar sins for which the Canaanites were destroyed or subjected to bondage were allied to those which are referred to in the text (*vide* Levit. xviii. 27). *Exactly fulfilled* by the subjugation of the land of Canaan under Joshua and David, though here it should be noted that the enslavement of the African negro, who, though a Hamite, is not a Canaanite, was a daring defiance of those limits within which the supreme Judge had confined the sentence pronounced upon the Hamite race. *Mercifully cancelled* by the later promise which was given to Abraham, and is now fulfilled in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ—of a seed in whom all the families of the earth should be

blessed (Gen. xxii. 18). 2. *The exaltation of Shem.* "Blessed be Jehovah, the Elohim of Shem," &c., in which description was the promise of a threefold exaltation. (1) To *supremacy in the Church*, as being possessed of the knowledge of the true religion, as being enriched with the fulness of blessing that is in Jehovah Elohim, as being the Divinely-appointed medium through which the first promise of the woman's seed was to be fulfilled, and he was to come whose name should be above every name. (2) To *dominion in the world.* In virtue of the religious ascendancy conferred upon him, Shem was to be possessed of power to influence other nations for good, and in particular to receive into his service, for education as well as for assistance, the descendants of Canaan. (3) To *renown throughout all time.* As much as this perhaps is hinted at in the name Shem; and to this day the glory which encircled the Shemitic nations of antiquity has not faded, but continues to shine down the centuries with undiminished lustre. 3. *The enlargement of Japheth.* "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." A promise of—1. *Territorial expansion.* While the Shemite tribes should remain in a manner concentrated in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Japhethites should spread themselves abroad westward as the pioneers of civilisation. 2. *Spiritual enrichment*, by being brought ultimately to share in the religious privileges and blessings of the Shemites—a prediction which has been abundantly fulfilled by the admission of the Gentiles to the Christian Church. 3. *Civilising influence.* As Canaan was subjected to Shem in order, while he served, to be instructed in the faith of his master, so does he seem to have been placed beneath the sway of Japheth, that Japheth might lead him forth to a participation of the peculiar blessings which he has been commissioned to bestow upon the other nations of the earth.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 18—29.—*The threefold distribution of the human race*—into the Shemitic, Hamitic, and Japhetic families. The fall of Noah was through wine; not, indeed, a forbidden product of the earth, but, like the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, representing a *tremendous responsibility.*

I. THE FERTILITY OF SIN. It was out of *drunkenness* that the widespread curse of the Hamitic nations came forth. And the drunkenness is closely connected with other sins—(1) shameful *degradation both of father and son*, (2) *alienation of brethren*, and (3) *human slavery.* What a picture of the forthcoming results of intemperance and self-indulgence!

II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE IN THEIR WORKING OUT. Noah's prediction of the blessing on Shem and Japheth and the curse upon Ham may be taken as an outline of the religious history of the world. 1. The *Shemitic races* are the source of religious light to the rest. "*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.*" "*Jehovah,*" the Shemitic revelation, is the foundation of all other. 2. The *Japhetic races* are the great *colonisers* and *populators* of the world, overflowing their own boundaries, dwelling in the tents of Shem, both as inquirers after Shemitic light and in friendly co-operation with Shemitic civilisation. 3. The *Hamitic races* are *servants of servants* unto their brethren, partly by their *degradation*, but partly also by their *achievements.* The Phœnician, Assyrian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, and Canaanitish races, although by no means always in a lower *political* state than the rest of the world, have yet been subdued by Japhetic and Shemitic conquerors, and handed down their wealth and acquirements to the Northern, Western, and Eastern world.

III. THE RENOVATION OF THE EARTH UNDER THE NEW COVENANT. After the Flood Noah lived the half week of centuries, and thus laid firmly the *foundations of a new earth.* Yet, prolonged as was that life of him who had "*found grace in the eyes of the Lord,*" it came to an end at last. *He died.* The *one* became the *three.* 1. The *blessing handed on.* The type of *rest* and *comfort* was spread through the redeemed earth. And from henceforth we have to deal not with the *small beginnings* of the rescued race, but with the *vast multitude* of human beings. 2. *New sphere of trial.* Under the light of the new covenant again the new race were placed upon their trial, that again the redeeming mercy of him who willeth not the death of his creatures may be made manifest in the midst of the teeming earth, with its *threefold humanity*, spreading eastward, westward, northward, and southward.—R.

PART II.

THE POST-DILUVIAN AGE OF THE WORLD. CH. X. 1—XI. 26.

FROM THE DELUGE TO THE CALL OF ABRAM.

§ 5. THE GENERATIONS OF THE SONS OF NOAH (CH. X. 1—XI. 9).

I. THE *historical credibility* of the present section has been challenged. 1. On account of a fancied resemblance to the ethnographic mythologies of Greece, the genealogical table of the nations has been relegated to the category of fictitious invention. It has been assigned by many critics to a post-Mosaic period, to the days of Joshua (Delitzsch), to the age of Hebrew intercourse with the Phenician Canaanites (Knobel), to the era of the exile (Bohlen); and the specific purpose of its composition has been declared to be a desire to gratify the national pride of the Hebrews by tracing their descent to the first-born son of Noah, that their rights might appear to have a superior foundation to those of other nations (Hartmann). But the primogeniture of Shem is at least doubtful, if not entirely incorrect, Japheth being the oldest of Noah's sons (*vide* ch. v. 32; x. 21); while it is a gratuitous assumption that not until the days of the monarchy, or the exile, did the Israelites become acquainted with foreign nations. The authenticity and genuineness of the present register, it is justly remarked by Hävernick, are guaranteed by the chronicler (ch. i. 1). "In the time of the chronicler nothing more was known from antiquity concerning the origin of nations than what Genesis supplied. Supposing, then, that some inquiring mind composed this table of nations from merely reflecting on the nations that happened to exist at the same period, and attempting to give them a systematic arrangement, how could it possibly happen that his turn of mind should be in such complete harmony with that of the other? This could only arise from the one recognising the decided superiority of the other's account, which here lies in nothing else than the historical truth itself belonging to it" (Intro., § 17). And the historical truthfulness of the Mosaic document is further strikingly authenticated by the accredited results of modern ethnological science, which, having undertaken by a careful analysis of facts to establish a classification of races, has divided mankind into three primitive groups (Shemitic, Aryan, Turanian or Allophylian), corresponding not obscurely to the threefold arrangement of the present table, and presenting in each group the leading races that Genesis assigns to the several sons of Noah; as, *e. g.*, allocating to the Indo-European family, as Moses has done to the sons of Japheth, the principal races of Europe, with the great Asiatic race known as Aryan; to the Shemitic, the Assyrians, Syrians, Hebrews, and Joktanite Arabs, which appear among the sons of Shem in the present table; and to the Allophylian, the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Southern Arabs, and early Babylonians, which the primitive ethnologist of Genesis also writes among the sons of Ham (cf. Rawlinson's 'Hist. Illus. of O. T.,' p. 23). 2. The narrative of the building of the tower of Babel has also been impugned, and that chiefly on two grounds: viz., (1) an incorrect derivation of the term Babel, which is now said to have no connection whatever with the confusion of tongues, but to be the word "Bab-il," the house or gate of God, or "Bāb-Bel," the gate or court of Belus; and (2) an incorrect explanation of the present diversity of tongues among mankind, which modern philology has now shown to be due to local separation, and not at all to a miraculous

interference with the organs or the faculty of speech. To each of these objections a specific reply will be returned in the exposition of the text (*q. v.*); in the mean time it may be stated that there are not wanting sufficiently numerous testimonies from ancient history, archæological research, and philological inquiry to authenticate this most interesting portion of the Divine record.

II. The *literary unity* of the present section has been assailed. Tuch ascribes ch. x. to the Elohist and ch. xi. 1—9 to the Jehovist; and with this Bleek and Vaihinger agree, except that they apportion ch. x. 8—12 to the Jehovist. Davidson assigns to him the whole of ch. x., with the exception of the expression "every one after his tongue" (ver. 5), the similar expressions (vers. 20, 31), the story of Nimrod commencing at "he began" (ver. 8), ver. 21, and the statement beginning "for" (ver. 25), all of which, with ch. xi. 1—9, he places to the credit of his redactor. But the literary unity of the entire section is so apparent that Colenso believes both passages, "the table of nations" and "the confusion of tongues," to be the work of the Jehovist; and certainly the latter narrative is represented in so intimate a connection with the former that it is much more likely to have been composed by the original historian than inserted later as a happy afterthought by a post-exilian editor.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER X.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this ethnological table. Whether regarded from a geographical, a political, or a theocratical standpoint, "this unparalleled list, the combined result of reflection and deep research," is "no less valuable as a historical document than as a lasting proof of the brilliant capacity of the Hebrew mind." Undoubtedly the earliest effort of the human intellect to exhibit in a tabulated form the geographical distribution of the human race, it bears unmistakable witness in its own structure to its high antiquity, occupying itself least with the Japhetic tribes which were furthest from the theocratic centre, and were latest in attaining to historic eminence, and enlarging with much greater minuteness of detail on those Hamitic nations, the Egyptian, Canaanite, and Arabian, which were soonest developed, and with which the Hebrews came most into contact in the initial stages of their career. It describes the rise of states, and, consistently with all subsequent historical and archæological testimony, gives the prominence to the Egyptian or Arabian Hamites, as the first founders of empires. It exhibits the separation of the Shemites from the other sons of Noah, and the budding forth of the line of promise in the family of Arphaxad. While thus useful to the geographer, the historian, the politician, it is specially serviceable to the theologian, as enabling him to trace the descent of the woman's seed, and to mark the fulfilments of Scripture prophecies concerning the nations of the earth. In the interpretation of the names which are here recorded, it is obviously impossible in every instance to arrive at certainty, in some cases the names of individuals being mentioned, while in others it is as conspicuously those of peoples.

Ver. 1.—**Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah** (cf. ch. v. 1; vi. 9), **Shem, Ham, and Japheth.** Not the order of age, but of theocratic importance (*vide* ch. v. 32). **And unto them were sons born** (cf. ch. ix. 1, 7, 19, 22) **after the flood.** An indication of the *punctum temporis* whence the period embraced in the present section takes its departure.

Ver. 2.—**The sons of Japheth** are first mentioned not because Japheth was the eldest of the three brothers, although that was true, but because of the greater distance of the Japhetic tribes from the theocratic centre, the Hamites having always been much more nearly situated to and closely connected with the Shemites than they. The immediate descendants of Japheth, whose name, Ἰάπετος, occurs again in the mythology of a Japhetic race, were fourteen in number, seven sons and seven grandsons, each of which became the progenitor of one of the primitive nations. **Gomer.** A people inhabiting "the sides of the north" (Ezek. xxxviii. 6); the Galatæ of the Greeks (Josephus, 'Ant.,' i. 6); the Chomarii, a nation in Bactriana on the Oxus (Shulthess, Kalisch); but more generally the Cimmerians of Homer ('Odyss.,' xi. 13—19), whose abodes were the shores of the Caspian and Euxine,

whence they seem to have spread themselves over Europe as far west as the Atlantic, leaving traces of their presence in the Cimbri of North Germany and the Cymri in Wales (Keil, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And Magog.** A fierce and warlike people presided over by Gog (an appellative name, like the titles Pharaoh and Cæsar, and corresponding with the Turkish Chak, the Tartarian Kak, and the Mongolian Gog: Kalisch), whose complete destruction was predicted by Ezekiel (chs. xxxviii. xxxix.); generally understood to be the Scythians, whose territory lay upon the borders of the sea of Asoph, and in the Caucasus. In the Apocalypse (ch. xx. 8—10) Gog and Magog appear as two distinct nations combined against the Church of God. **And Madai.** The inhabitants of Media (Mada in the cuneiform inscriptions), so called because believed to be situated περὶ μέσην τὴν 'Ασίαν (Polyb. v. 44) on the south-west shore of the Caspian. **And Javan.** Identical with 'Ιάων (Greek), Javana (Sanscrit), Juna (Old Persian), Jounan (Rosetta Stone); allowed to be the father of the Greeks, who in Scripture are styled Javan (*vide* Isa. lxvi. 19; Ezek. xxvii. 13; Dan. viii. 21; x. 20; Joel iii. 6). **And Tubal, and Meshech.** Generally associated in Scripture as tributaries of Magog (Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3; xxxix. 1); recognised as the Iberians and Moschi in the north of Armenia, between the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates, and the Black Sea (Josephus, Knobel, Lange, Kalisch). **And Tiras.** The ancestor of the Thracians (Josephus), of the Tyrrheni, a branch of the Pelasgians (Tuch), of the Asiatic tribes round the Taurus (Kalisch), in support of which last is a circumstance mentioned by Rawlinson, that on the old Egyptian monuments *Mashuash* and *Tuirash*, and upon the Assyrian *Tubal* and *Misek*, stand together as here. Tiras occurs nowhere else in Scripture.

Ver. 3.—**And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz.** Axenus, the ancient name of the Euxine, is supposed to favour Phrygia and Bithynia as the locality possessed by Askenaz (Bochart); Iskus, equivalent to Ask, Ascanios, the oldest son of the Germanic Mannus, to point out Germany as his abode (Jewish commentators); but Jer. li. 27 seems to indicate the region between the Euxine and the Caspian. Kalisch, following Josephus, identifies the name with the ancient town Rhagæ, one day's journey to the south of the Caspian. Murphy and Poole, on the authority of Diodorus Siculus, believe the Germans may have been a colony of the Ashkenians. **And Riphath.** Diphath (1 Chron. i. 6)—the Paphlagonians (Josephus); more generally the tribes about the Riphæan mountains, on the north of the Caspian (Knobel, Kalisch, Clericus, Rosenmüller, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'); but both are uncertain (Keil). **And Togarmah.** Mentioned again in Ezek. xxvii. 14; xxxviii. 6; the Phrygians (Josephus), the Cappadocians (Bochart), the Armenians (Michaelis, Gesenius, Rosenmüller), the Taurians, inhabiting the Crimea (Kalisch). The tradition preserved by Moses Chorensis, that the ancestor of the Armenians was the son of Thorgom, the son of Gomer, is commonly regarded as deciding the question.

Ver. 4.—**And the sons of Javan; Elishah.** The isles of Elishah are praised by Ezekiel (xxvii. 7) for their blue and purple; supposed to have been Elis in the Peloponnesus, famous for its purple dyes (Bochart); Æolis (Josephus, Knobel); Hellas (Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Kalisch); without doubt a maritime people of Grecian stock ('Speaker's Commentary'). **And Tarshish.** Tarsus in Cilicia (Josephus); but rather Tartessus in Spain (Eusebius, Michaelis, Bochart, Kalisch). Biblical notices represent Tarshish as a wealthy and flourishing seaport town towards the west (*vide* 1 Kings x. 22; Ps. xlviii. 7; lxxii. 10; Isa. lx. 9; lxvi. 19; Jer. x. 9; Ezek. xxvii. 12). **Kittim.** Chittim (Num. xxiv. 24); Citium in Cyprus (Josephus), though latterly the name appears to have been extended to Citium in Macedonia (Alexander the Great is called the king of Chittim, 1 Macc. i. 1; viii. 5), and the colonies which settled on the shores of Italy and Greece (Bochart, Keil, Kalisch). Isa. xxiii. 1, 12; Dan. xi. 30 describe it as a maritime people. **And Dodanim.** Dordona in Epirus (Michaelis, Rosenmüller); the Dardanians, or Trojans (Gesenius); the Daunians of South Italy (Kalisch); the Rhodani in Gaul, reading as in 1 Chron. i 7 (Bochart). Josephus omits the name, and Scripture does not again mention it.

Ver. 5.—**By these were the isles of the Gentiles.** Sea-washed coasts as well as islands proper (cf. Isa. xlii. 4 with Matt. xii. 21). Isaiah (ch. xx. 6) styles Canaan an isle (cf. Peloponnesus). The expression signifies maritime countries. **Divided in their lands; every one after his tongue.** Indicating a time posterior to the building of Babel (ch. xi. 1). **After their families.** 'Εν ταῖς φυλαῖς αὐτῶν (LXX.); in their tribes or clans, a lesser subdivision than the next. **In their nations.** The division here exhibited is fourfold: (1) geographical, (2) dialectical, (3) tribal, and (4) national. The first defines the territory occupied, and the second the language spoken by the Japhethites; the third their immediate descent, and the fourth the national group to which they severally belonged.

Ver. 6.—**And the sons of Ham.** These, who occupy the second place, that the list might conclude with the Shemites as the

line of promise, number thirty, of whom only four were immediate descendants. Their territory generally embraced the southern portions of the globe. Hence the name Ham has been connected with חָמַם, to be warm, though Kalisch declares it to be not of Hebrew, but Egyptian origin, appearing in the Chmé of the Rosetta Stone. The most usual ancient name of the country was *Kem*, the *black* land. Scripture speaks of Egypt as the land of Ham (Ps. lxxviii. 51; cv. 23; cvi. 22). **Cush.** Ethiopia, including Arabia "quæ mater est," and Abyssinia "quæ colonia" (Michaelis, Rosenmüller). The original settlement of Cush, however, is believed to have been on the Upper Nile, whence he afterwards spread to Arabia, Babylonia, India (Knobel, Kalisch, Lange, Rawlinson). Murphy thinks he may have started from the Caucasus, the Caspian, and the Cossaei of Khusistan, and migrated south (to Egypt) and east (to India). Josephus mentions that in his day Ethiopia was called Cush; the Syriac translates ἀνὴρ Ἀιθίοψ (Acts viii. 27) by Cuschaeos; the ancient Egyptian name of Ethiopia was *Keesh*, Kish, or Kush ('Records of the Past,' iv. 7). The Cushites are described as of a black colour (Jer. xiii. 23) and of great stature (Isa. xlv. 14). **And Mizraim.** A dual form probably designed to represent the two Egypts, upper and lower (Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch), though it has been discovered in ancient Egyptian as the name of a Hittite chief (*circa* B.C. 1300, contemporary with Rameses II.), written in hieroglyphics *M'azrima*, Ma being the sign for the dual. The old Egyptian name is *Kemi*, *Chemi*, with obvious reference to Ham; the name Egypt being probably derived from *Kaphtah*, the land of Ptah. The singular form Mazor is found in later books (2 Kings xix. 24; Isa. xix. 6; xxxv. 25), and usually denotes Lower Egypt. **And Phut.** *Phet* (Old Egyptian), *Phaiat* (Coptic); the Libyans in the north of Africa (Josephus, LXX., Gesenius, Bochart). Kalisch suggests *Buto'* or *Butos*, the capital of the delta of the Nile. **And Canaan.** Hebrew, *Kenaan* (*vide* on ch. ix. 25). The extent of the territory occupied by the fourth son of Ham is defined in vers. 15—19.

Ver. 7.—**And the sons of Cush; Seba.** Meroe, in Nubia, north of Ethiopia (Josephus, 'Ant.,' ii. 10). **And Havilah.** Εὐϊλά (LXX.); may refer to an African tribe, the Avalitae, south of Babelmandeb (Keil, Lange, Murphy), or the district of Chaulan in Arabia Felix (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Wordsworth). Verse 29 mentions Havilah as a Shemite territory. Kalisch regards them as "the same country, extending from the Arabian to the Persian Gulf, and, on account of its vast extent, easily divided into two distinct parts" (cf. ch. ii. 11). **And Sabtah.** The Astaborans of Ethiopia (Josephus, Gesenius, Kalisch); the Ethiopians of Arabia, whose chief city was Sabota (Knobel, Rosenmüller, Lange, Keil). **And Raamah.** Ῥέγμα (LXX.); Ragma on the Persian Gulf, in Oman (Bochart, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Lange). **And Sabtechah.** Nigritia (Targum, Jonathan), which the name *Subatok*, discovered on Egyptian monuments, seems to favour (Kalisch); on the east of the Persian Gulf at Samydace of Carmania (Bochart, Knobel, Rosenmüller, Lange). **And the sons of Raamah; Sheba.** The principal city of Arabia Felix (1 Kings x. 1; Job i. 15; vi. 19; Ps. lxxii. 10, 15; Isa. lx. 6; Jer. vi. 20; Ezek. xxvii. 22; Joel iii. 8); occurs again (ch. v. 28) as a son of Joktan; probably was peopled both by Hamites and Shemites. **And Dedan.** Daden on the Persian Gulf (*vide* Isa. xxi. 13; Jer. xlix. 8; Ezek. xxv. 13; xxvii. 12—15).

Ver. 8.—**And Cush begat**—not necessarily as immediate progenitor, any ancestor being in Hebrew styled a father—**Nimrod**; the rebel, from *maradh*, to rebel; the name of a person, not of a people;—*Namuret* in ancient Egyptian. Though not one of the great ethnic heads, he is introduced into the register of nations as the founder of imperialism. Under him society passed from the patriarchal condition, in which each separate clan or tribe owns the sway of its natural head, into that (more abject or more civilised according as it is viewed) in which many different clans or tribes recognise the sway of one who is not their natural head, but has acquired his ascendancy and dominion by conquest. This is the principle of monarchism. Eastern tradition has painted Nimrod as a gigantic oppressor of the people's liberties and an impious rebel against the Divine authority. Josephus credits him with having instigated the building of the tower of Babel. He has been identified with the Orion of the Greeks. Scripture may seem to convey a bad impression of Nimrod, but it does not sanction the absurdities of Oriental legend. **He began to be a mighty one**—*Gibbor* (*vide* ch. vi. 4); what he had been previously being expressed in ver. 5—**in the earth.** Not ἐπι τῆς γῆς (LXX.), as if pointing to his gigantic stature, but either among men generally, with reference to his widespread fame, or perhaps better "in the land" where he dwelt, which was not Babel, but Arabia (*vide* ver. 6).

Ver. 9.—**He was a mighty hunter.** Originally doubtless of wild beasts, which, according to Bochart, was the first step to usurping dominion over men and using them for battle. "Nempe venationum prætextu collegit juvenum robustam manum, quam talibus exercitus ad belli labores induravit" ('Phaleg.;' liv. 12). **Before the Lord.** 1. Ἐναντίον κυρίου (LXX.), in a spirit of de-

fiance (Augustine, Keil, Murphy, Bush). 2. *Coram Deo*, in God's sight, as an aggravation of his sin—cf. ch. xiii. 3 (Cajetan). 3. As a superlative, declaring his excellence—cf. ch. xiii. 10; xxx. 8; xxxv. 5; 1 Sam. xi. 7; John iii. 3; Acts vii. 20 (Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary'). 4. With the Divine approbation, as one who broke the way through rude, uncultivated nature for the institutions of Jehovah (Lange). Cf. ch. xvii. 18; xxiv. 40; 1 Sam. xi. 15; Ps. xli. 12. Probably the first or the third conveys the sense of the expression. **Wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the (a) mighty hunter before the Lord.** The precise import of this is usually determined by the view taken of the previous phrase.

Ver. 10.—**And the beginning of his kingdom.** Either his first kingdom, as contrasted with his second (Knobel), or the commencement of his sovereignty (Keil, Kalisch), or the principal city of his empire (Rosenmüller); or all three may be legitimately embraced in the term *reshith*, only it does not necessarily imply that Nimrod *built* any of the cities mentioned. **Was Babel.** Babylon, "the land of Nimrod" (Micah v. 6), the origin of which is described in ch. xi. 1, grew to be a great city covering an area of 225 square miles, reached its highest glory under Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 30), and succumbed to the Medo-Persian power under Belshazzar (Dan. v. 31). The remains of this great city have been discovered on the east bank of the Euphrates near Hillah, where there is a square mound called "Babil" by the Arabs (Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' vol. i. ch. 1). **And Erech.** The Orchoe of Ptolemy, identified by Rawlinson as Wurka, about eighty miles south of Babylon. **And Accad.** Ἀρχάδ (LXX.); the city Sittace on the river Argade (Bochart); Sakada, a town planted by Ptolemy below Ninus (Clericus); Accete, north of Babylon (Knobel, Lange); identified with the ruins of Niffer, to the south of Hillah (Keil); with those of Akkerkoof, north of Hillah (Kalisch). Rawlinson does not identify the site; George Smith regards it as "the capital of Sargon, the great city Agadi, near the city of Sippara on the Euphrates, and north of Babylon" ('Assyrian Discoveries,' ch. xii.). **And Calneh.** Calno (Isa. x. 9); Canneh (Ezek. xxvii. 23); Ctesiphon, east of the Tigris, north-east of Babylon (Jerome, Eusebius, Bochart, Michaelis, Kalisch); identified with the ruins of Niffer on the east of the Euphrates (Rawlinson). **In the land of Shinar.** Babylonia, as distinguished from Assyria (Isa. xi. 11), the lower part of Mesopotamia, or Chaldæa.

Ver. 11.—**Out of that land went forth Asshur,** the son of Shem (ver. 22; LXX., Vulgate, Syriac, Luther, Calvin, Michaelis, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Bohlen); *i. e.* the early Assyrians retired from Babylon before their Cushite invaders, and, proceeding northward, founded the cities after mentioned; but the marginal rendering seems preferable: "Out of that land went (Nimrod) into Asshur," or Assyria, the country north-east of Babylon, through which flows the Tigris, and which had already received its name from the son of Shem (the Targums, Drusius, Bochart, Le Clerc, De Wette, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, *et alii*). **And builded Nineveh.** The capital of Assyria, opposite Mosul on the Tigris, afterwards became the largest and most flourishing city of the ancient world (Jonah iii. 3; iv. 11), being fifty-five miles in circumference (Diod., ii. 3), and is now identified with the ruins of Nebbi-yunus and Kouyunjik (Layard's 'Nineveh,' vol. ii. pp. 136 ff.). **And the city Rehoboth.** *Rehoboth-ir*, literally, the streets of the city (cf. Platæa, a city in Bœotia), a town of which the site is unknown. **And Calah.** The mounds of Nimroud (Layard and Smith), though Kalisch and Murphy prefer Kalah Shergat (about fifty miles south of Nineveh), which the former authorities identify with Asshur, the original capital of the country.

Ver. 12.—**And Resen,** *i. e.* Nimroud, between Kalah Shergat and Kouyunjik (Kalisch); but if Calah be Nimroud, then Resen may be Selamiyeh, a village about half way, **between Nineveh and Calah,** *i. e.* Kouyunjik and Nimroud, *ut supra* (Layard). **The same.** Resen (Kalisch), which will suit if it was Nimroud, whose remains cover a parallelogram about 1800 feet in length and 900 feet in breadth; but others apply it to Nineveh with the other towns as forming one large composite city (Knobel, Keil, Lange, Wordsworth). **Is a great city.** With this the record of Nimrod's achievements closes. It is generally supposed that Nimrod flourished either before or about the time of the building of the tower of Babel; but Prof. Chwolsen of St. Petersburg, in his 'Ueber die Ueberreste der Altbabylonischen Literatur,' brings the dynasty of Nimrod down as late as 1500 B.C., relying principally on the evidence of an original work composed by Qût'âmi, a native Babylonian, and translated by Ibn-wa'hschijjah, a descendant of the Chaldæans, and assigned by Chwolsen to one of the earlier periods of Babylonian history, in which is mentioned the name of Nemrod, or Nemroda, as the founder of a Canaanite dynasty which ruled at Babylon (*vide* an excellent paper on this subject in Turner's 'Biblical and Oriental Studies,' Edin., A. and C. Black, 1876). Perhaps the hardest difficulty to explain in connection with the ordinary date assigned to Nimrod is the fact that in ch. xiv., which speaks of the reigning monarchs in the

Euphrates valley, there is no account taken of Nineveh and its king—a circumstance which has been supposed to import that the founding of the capital of Assyria could not have been anterior to the days of Abraham. But early Babylonian texts confirm what ch. xiv. seems to imply—the fact of an Elamite conquest of Babylonia, B.C. 2280, by Kudur-nanhundi (Kudurlagamar, the Chederlaomer of Genesis), who carried off an image of the goddess Nana from the city Erech (*vide* 'Assyrian Discoveries,' ch. xii. ; 'Records of the Past,' vol. iii.), so that this difficulty may be held to have disappeared before the light of archæological discovery. But at whatever period Nimrod flourished, the Biblical narrative would lead us to anticipate a commingling of Hamitic and Shemitic tongues in the Euphrates valley, which existing monuments confirm (cf. 'Records of the Past,' vol. iii. p. 3).

Ver. 13.—**And Mizraim begat Ludim.** An African tribe, a colony of the Egyptians, like the next seven, which are "nomina non singulorum hominum sed populorum" (Aben Ezra, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Murphy); probably referred to in connection with Tarshish and Put (Isa. lxvi. 19), with Kush and Put (Jer. xlvi. 9), and in connection with Put (Ezek. xxvii. 10; xxx. 5). Lud (ver. 22) was Shemitic. **And Anamim.** Not elsewhere mentioned; the inhabitants of the Delta (Knobel). **And Lehabim.** Lubim (2 Chron. xii. 3; Dan. ii. 43; Nahum iii. 9); Libyans (Dan. xi. 43); probably the Libyans west of Egypt (Michaelis, Kalisch, Murphy). **And Naphtuhim.** Nephthys, near Pelusium, on the Lake Sirbonis (Bochart); the Libyan town Napata (Kalisch); the people of Middle Egypt (Knobel).

Ver. 14.—**And Pathrusim.** Pathros in Upper Egypt. **And Casluhim.** The Colchians, of Egyptian origin (Bochart, Gesenius); the inhabitants of the primitive Egyptian town Chemnis, later Panoplis (Kalisch). **Out of whom came Philistim.** The Philistines on the Mediterranean from Egypt to Joppa, who had five principal cities—Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. They are here described as an offshoot from Casluhim. The name has been derived from an Ethiopic root *fălăsă*, to emigrate; hence "immigrants" or "emigrants." Jer. xlvii. 4 and Amos ix. 7 trace the Philistines to the Caphtorim. Michaelis solves the difficulty by transposing the clause to the end of the verse; Bochart by holding the Casluhim and Caphtorim to have intermingled; Keil and Lange by the conjecture that the original tribe the Casluhim was subsequently strengthened by an immigration from Caphtor. Against the Egyptian origin of the Philistines the possession of a Shemitic tongue and the non-observance of circumcision have been urged; but the first may have been acquired from the conquered Avim whose land they occupied (Deut. ii. 23), and the exodus from Egypt may have taken place prior to the institution of the rite in question. **And Caphtorim.** Cappadocia (Bochart), Syrtis Major (Clericus), Crete (Calmet, Ewald), Cyprus (Michaelis, Rosenmüller), Coptos, Kouft or Keft, a few miles north of Thebes (Kalisch).

Ver. 15.—**And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn.** A famous commercial and maritime town on the coast of Syria (1 Kings v. 6; 1 Chron. xxii. 4; Isa. xxiii. 2, 4, 12; Ezek. xxvii. 8); here including Tyre. From the mention of the circumstance that Sidon was Canaan's firstborn, we may infer that in the rest of the table the order of seniority is not followed. **And Heth.** The father of the Hittites (ch. xxiii. 3, 5), identified by Egyptologers with the Kheta, a powerful Syrian tribe.

Ver. 16.—**And the Jebusite.** Settled at and around Jerusalem (Josh. xv. 8; Judges xix. 10, 11; 1 Chron. xi. 4, 5). **And the Amorite.** On both sides of the Jordan, though dwelling chiefly in the Judæan mountains (ch. xiv. 7; Josh. x. 5), to which the name "mountaineer," from "Amor," elevation (Gesenius), is supposed to refer. **And the Girgasite.** The name only is preserved (Josh. xxiv. 11).

Ver. 17.—**And the Hivite.** "Villagers" (Gesenius); "settlers in cities" (Ewald); their localities are mentioned in ch. xxxiv. 2; Josh. ix. 1, 7; xi. 3; Judges vi. 3. **And the Arkite.** Inhabitants of Arka, a city of Phœnicia (Josephus) afterwards called Cæsarea Libani; its ruins still exist at Tel Arka, at the foot of Lebanon. **And the Sinite.** The inhabitants of Sin. Near Arka are a fortress named Senna, ruins called Sin, and a village designated Syn.

Ver. 18.—**And the Arvadite,**—dwelt in Arvad, Aradus, now Ruad (Josephus)—**and the Zemarite,**—Simyra, a city of Phœnicia (Bochart, Michaelis, Gesenius, Kalisch) whose ruins are still called Sumrah—**and the Hamathite.** The inhabitants of Hamath, called Hammath Rabbah (Amos vi. 2); Epiphaneia by the Greeks; now Hamah. **And afterwards**—*i. e.* subsequent to the formation of these distinct tribes by the confusion of tongues—**were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.**

Ver. 19.—**And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon** (its northern boundary), **as thou comest**—*i. e.* as thou goest, in the direction of—**to Gerar,**—between Kadesh and Shur (ch. xx. 1)—**unto Gaza** (now called Guzzeh, at the south-west corner of Palestine); **as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim** (*vide* ch. xix. 24), **even unto Lasha**—Callirrhoe (Hieronymus, Jerusalem Targum, Josephus, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch); possibly a vari-

ation of Laish and Leshem, a Sidonian city near the sources of the Jordan (Murphy).

Ver. 20.—**These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations** (*vide* ver. 5).

Ver. 21.—**Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber,**—as Ham of Canaan (ch. ix. 22; *vide* ver. 24)—**the brother of Japheth the elder.** Either the eldest brother of Japheth (Syriac, Arabic, Vulgate, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Kalisch); or the brother of Japheth who was older (LXX., Symmachus, Onkelos, Raschi, Aben Ezra, Luther, Clericus, Michaelis, Dathe); or the elder of Japheth's brothers, as distinguished from Ham the younger, *i. e.* the son who was older than Ham, but younger than Japheth (Murphy, Quarry; *vide* ch. v. 32). **Even to him were children born.**

Ver. 22. — **The children of Shem** were twenty-six in number, of whom five were sons. **Elam.** Elymais, a region adjoining Susiana and Media, stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea; the people first met with as Persians. **And Asshur.** The ancestor of the Assyrians (*vide* ver. 11). **And Arphaxad.** A region in the north of Assyria; the Arrhapacitis of Ptolemy (Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch). The explanation of the name is "fortress of the Chaldæans" (Ewald); "highland of the Chaldæans" (Knobel). **And Lud.** The Lydians of Asia Minor, to which they appear to have migrated from the land of Shem (Josephus, Bochart, Keil, Kalisch). **And Aram.** "The high land;" Mesopotamia being the Aram of the two rivers, and Syria the Aram of Damascus.

Ver. 23.—**And the children of Aram; Uz,** from whom was named the land of Uz (Job i. 1), south-east of Palestine, a tract of the Arabia Deserta. **And Hul.** In Armenia (Josephus); that part called Cholobetene, or house of Hul (Bochart); the Hylatæ of Syria, near the Emesenes (Delitzsch); Cœlesyria (Michaelis); Huleh, near the sources of the Jordan (Murphy). **And Gether**—of uncertain situation—**and Mash**—traced in Mons Masius of Armenia (Bochart).

Ver. 24. —**And Arphaxad begat Salah.** The nation descended from him has not been identified, though their name, "Extension," may imply that they were early colonists. **And Salah begat Eber.** The father of the Hebrews or "Emigrants" (*vide* ver. 21).

Ver. 25.—**And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg.** "Division," from *palag*, to divide; cf. πέλαγος and *pelagus*, a division of the sea. **For in his days was the earth divided.** At the confusion of tongues (Bochart, Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Murphy); at an earlier separation of the earth's population (Delitzsch), of which there is no record or trace. **And his brother's name was Joktan.** Father of the Arabians, by whom he is called Kachtan.

Vers. 26—30.—**And Joktan begat Almodad.** Usually said to be Yemen. **And Sheleph.** The Salapenoi of Ptolemy, belonging to the interior of Arabia. **And Hazarmaveth.** Hadramaut, south-east of Arabia (Bochart, Michaelis). **And Jerah.** Contiguous to Hadramaut. **And Hadoram.** Adramitæ of Ptolemy, or the Atramitæ of Pliny (Bochart). **And Uzal.** Awzal, the capital of Yemen (Bochart). **And Diklah.** The palm-bearing region of Arabia Felix (Bochart); a tribe between the mouth of the Tiber and the Persian Gulf (Michaelis). **And Obal, and Abimael,** whose settlements are not known. **And Sheba.** *Vide supra*, ver. 7. **And Ophir.** In Arabia; probably in Oman, on the Persian Gulf (Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Keil), though it has also been located in India (Josephus, Vitringa, Gesenius, Delitzsch). The gold of Ophir celebrated (1 Kings ix. 27, 28; 2 Chron. ix. 10, 13, 21). **And Havilah.** The Chaulan in Arabia Felix, but *vide supra*, ver. 7. **And Jobab.** The Jobabitæ of Ptolemy, near the Indian Sea (Michaelis, Rosenmüller); but more probably a tribe in Arabia Deserta if Jobab = Arabic *jebab*, a desert (Bochart, Gesenius, Kalisch). **All these** were **the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha.** The seaport of Muza (Bochart); Messene, at the mouth of the Tigris (Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Kalisch). **As thou goest into Zephar.** Zafar or Dhafari, on the coast of the Hadramut. The difficulty of identifying a seaport town with a mountain is got over (Kalisch) by reading "to the" instead of **a mount of the east**—the thuriferous range of hills in the vicinity.

Vers. 31, 32.—**These** are **the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.** The pedigree of the Shemite tribes is closed with the customary formula (*vide* ver. 5); that which follows being the concluding formula for the entire table of nations. **These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations** (literally, *according to their Thôldôth, or historical developments*), **in their nations: and by these** (literally, *from these*) **were the nations divided** (or, did the nations scatter themselves) **in the earth after the flood.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 32.—*The ethnological register.* I. PROCLAIMS THE UNITY OF THE RACE. 1. It *declares* all the successive families of mankind to have sprung from a common stock. Diverse as they now are in their geographical situations, ethnic relations,

physical capabilities, national peculiarities, according to the doctrine of this genealogical table they all trace their origin to Noah and his sons. 2. It *condemns* all those theories which derive man from several pairs. Equally the heathen superstition which assigned to each particular region its own *Autochthones*, and the modern scientific dogma of varieties of species and distinct centres of propagation is here condemned. Even now ethnologists, archæologists, and philologists of the highest repute lend their sanction to the sublime sentiment of the great Mars' hill preacher, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon all the face of the earth." The anatomical structure of the human frame, especially of the brain and skull, the physiological properties and functions possessed by the body, the psychological nature of man, and the power of indefinite propagation, which are the same in all nations, with the ascertained results of comparative grammar, which have already traced back all existing languages to three primitive branches, tend in a powerful degree to confirm the doctrine which this table teaches. 3. It *implies* certain other truths on which Scripture with equal emphasis insists, such as the brotherhood of man, the universal corruption of the race, and the necessity and universality of Christ's redemption.

II. Attests the division of the race. 1. It *asserts the fact* of the division. It states that in the days of Peleg the earth's population was divided. The means employed are described in the succeeding chapter. 2. It *confirms the truth* of this division. Had the confusion at Babel not occurred, and the subsequent dispersion not followed, this table could not have been written. Its existence as a literary document in the time of Moses authenticates the fact which it reports. 3. It *defines the extent* of this division. It shows that the scattered race were to be split up into nations, families, tongues.

III. Illustrates the distribution of the race. The geographical distribution of the earth's population was—1. *Effected in an orderly manner*. They were neither scattered promiscuously nor suffered to wander and settle at hazard. Divided into tribes and nations according to their tongues and dialects of speech, they were allocated to distinct portions of the earth's surface. 2. *Specially adapted to the characters and destinies of the several nations*. The operation of purely natural principles makes it impossible that tribes can permanently settle in countries that are either incapable of yielding to them a maintenance or affording an outlet to their powers. More extensive information would doubtless enable the suitability of each locality in this table to the occupying people to be exhibited; but in broad outline it is perceptible even here—Japheth, whose destiny it was to spread abroad, being established on the coasts of the Euxine, the Caspian, and the Mediterranean; Ham finding rest in the warmer climates, whose enervating influences tended largely to develop his peculiar character, and ultimately to lay him open to subjection by the more vigorous races of the North; and Shem, whose function in the Divine economy it was to conserve religion and religious truth, being concentrated mainly in the Tigris and Euphrates valley. 3. *The result of Divine appointment*. Moses (Deut. xxxii. 8) and Paul (Acts xvii. 26) conspire to represent the allocation of territory to the different races of mankind as the handiwork of God (the special means employed for the breaking up of the originally united family of Noah's sons is detailed in the ensuing chapter); the import of which is, that nations have a God-assigned title to the countries which they occupy. 4. The Divinely-ordered distribution of the earth's population is *capable of being disturbed by the sinful interference of man*. Instances of this appear in the present table, *e. g.* the intrusion of the Cushite into Shinar, and of the Canaanite into what originally belonged to Shem.

IV. Predicts the future of the race. As it were, the separation of the earth's population into races and the moving of them outward to their respective habitations was the starting of them on the lines along which it was designed they should accomplish their respective destinies and common work. They were meant to overspread the globe; and this was the initiation of a great movement which would only terminate in the complete occupation of their God-given heritage.

Lessons:—1. The equal rights of men. 2. The sinfulness of wars of aggression. 3. The hopefulness of emigration.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 8.—*Nimrod.* 1. His ancestral pedigree—a Cushite. 2. His early occupation—a hunter of wild beasts, a pioneer of civilisation. 3. His rising ambition—he began to be a "Gibbor," or mighty one. 4. His regal authority—the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. 5. His extending empire—out of that land went he forth into Asshur. 6. His posthumous renown: "Wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod."—W.

Vers. 15—19.—*The Canaanites.* I. DESCENDANTS OF A WICKED FATHER. II. INHERITORS OF AN AWFUL CURSE. III. POSSESSORS OF A FAIR DOMAIN. IV. USURPERS OF ANOTHER'S LAND.

Lessons:—1. Wicked men and nations may greatly prosper. 2. Prosperity sometimes leads to greater wickedness. 3. The greatest prosperity cannot turn aside the punishment of sin.—W.

Ver. 25.—*Peleg, or the division of the people.* I. WHEN IT TOOK PLACE. In the fourth generation after the Flood.

II. HOW IT WAS EFFECTED. 1. By the Divine interposition. 2. By the confusion of tongues.

III. FOR WHAT IT WAS DESIGNED. 1. To punish sin. 2. To separate the Church. 3. To occupy the earth.

IV. BY WHAT IT WAS REMEMBERED. The naming of Eber's son.

Learn—1. To read well the signs of the times. 2. To understand well the cause of God's judgments. 3. To remember well the gift of God's mercies.—W.

Ver. 32.—*Nations.* I. THEIR ROOTS. Individuals.

II. THEIR RISE. 1. As to time, after the Flood. 2. As to cause, Divine impulse. 3. As to instrumentality, variation of speech.

III. THEIR CHARACTERISTICS. 1. A common head. 2. A common tongue. 3. A common land.

IV. THEIR DESTINIES. To overspread the earth.—W.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1.—**And the whole earth.** *I. e.* the entire population of the globe, and not simply the inhabitants of the land of Shinar (Inglis; cf. ch. ix. 29). **Was.** Prior to the dispersion spoken of in the preceding chapter, though obviously it may have been subsequent to that event, if, as the above-named author believes, the present paragraph refers to the Shemites alone. **Of one language.** Literally, *of one lip*, i. e. one articulation, or one way of pronouncing their vocables. **And of one speech.** Literally, *one* (kind of) *words*, i. e. the matter as well as the form of human speech was the same. The primitive language was believed by the Rabbins, the Fathers, and the older theologians to be Hebrew; but Keil declares this view to be utterly untenable. Bleek shows that the family of Abraham spoke in Aramaic (cf. Jegar-sahadutha, ch. xxxi. 47), and that the patriarch himself acquired Hebrew from the Canaanites, who may themselves have adopted it from the early Semites whom they displaced. While regarding neither the Aramaic, Hebrew, nor Arabic as the original tongue of mankind, he thinks the Hebrew approaches nearest the primitive Semite language out of which all three were developed.

Ver. 2.—**And it came to pass, as they journeyed.** Literally, *in their journeyings.* The root (נָסַע, to pull up, as, *e. g.*, the stakes of a tent when a camp moves, Isa. xxxiii. 20) suggests the idea of the migration of nomadic hordes (cf. ch. xii. 9; xxxiii. 17). **From the east.** *Ab oriente* (Ancient Versions, Calvin, *et alii*), meaning either that they started from Armenia, which was in the east *respectu terræ Canaan* (Luther), or from that portion of the Assyrian empire which was east of the Tigris, and called Orientalis, as distinguished from the Occidentalis on the west (Bochart); or that they first travelled westwards, following the direction of the Euphrates in one of its upper branches (Bush); or that, having roamed to the east of Shinar, they ultimately returned *occidentem versus* (Junius). The phrase, however, is admitted to be more correctly rendered *ad orientem* (Drusius, Lange, Keil, Murphy), as in ch. xiii. 11. Kalisch interprets generally *in oriente*, agreeing with Luther that

the migrations are viewed by the writer as taking place in the east; while T. Lewis prefers to read from one front part (the original meaning of *kedem*) to another—onwards. **That they found a plain.** בִּקְעָה; not a valley between mountain ranges, as in Deut. viii. 7; xi. 11; Ps. civ. 8, but a widely-extended plain (πεδίον, LXX.), like that in which Babylon was situated (Herod., lib. i. 178, κεῖται ἐν πεδίῳ μεγάλῳ; cf. Strabo, lib. ii. 109). **In the land of Shinar.** Babylonia (cf. ch. x. 10). The derivation of the term is unknown (Gesenius), though it probably meant the land of the two rivers (Alford). Its absence from ancient monuments (Rawlinson) suggests that it was the Jewish name for Chaldæa. **And they dwelt there.**

Ver. 3.—**And they said one to another.** Literally, *a man to his neighbour;* ἄνθρωπος τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ (LXX.). **Go to.** A hortatory expletive = come on (Anglicè). **Let us make brick.** *Nilbenah lebenim;* literally, let us brick bricks; πλινθεύσωμεν πλίνθους (LXX.); *laterifecimus lateres* (Calvin); *lebenah* (from *laban*, to be white), being so called from the white and chalky clay of which bricks were made. **And burn them thoroughly.** Literally, *burn them to a burning; venisrephah lisrephah,* a second alliteration, which, however, the LXX. fails to reproduce. Bricks were usually sun-dried; these, being designed to be more durable, were to be calcined through the agency of fire, a proof that the tower-builders were acquainted with the art of brick-making. **And they had**—literally, *and there was to them*—**brick for stone.** Chiefly because of the necessities of the place, the alluvial plain of Babylon being void of stones and full of clay; a proof of the greatness of their crime, seeing they were induced to undertake the work *non facilitate operis, nec aliis commodis, quæ se ad manum offerrent* (Calvin); scarcely because bricks would better endure fire than would stones, the second destruction of the world by fire rather than water being by this time a common expectation (Corn. à Lapide). Josephus, 'Ant.,' lib. i. cp. 4; Herod., lib. i. cp. 179; Justin, lib. i. cp. 2; Ovid, 'Metam.,' iv. 4; and Aristoph. in Avibus (περιτειχίζειν μεγάλαις πλίνθοις ὀπταῖς, ὥσπερ Βαβυλῶνα), all attest that the walls of Babylon were built of brick. The mention of the circumstance that brick was used instead of stone "indicates a writer belonging to a country and an age in which stone buildings were familiar, and therefore not to Babylonia" (Murphy). **And slime.** *Chemer*, from *chamar*, to boil up; ἄσφαλτος (LXX.); the bitumen which boils up from subterranean fountains like oil or hot pitch in the vicinity of Babylon, and also near the Dead Sea (*lacus asphaltites*). Tacitus, 'Hist.,' v. 6; Strabo, xvi. p. 743; Herod., lib. i. c. 179; Josephus, 'Antiq.,' lib. i. c. 4; Pliny, lib. xxxv. c. 15; Vitruvius, lib. viii. c. 3, are unanimous in declaring that the brick walls of Babylon were cemented with bitumen. Layard testifies that so firmly have the bricks been united that it is almost impossible to detach one from the mass ('Nineveh and Babylon,' p. 499). **Had they.** Literally, *was to them.* **For mortar.** *Chomer.* The third instance of alliteration in the present verse; possibly designed by the writer to represent the enthusiasm of the builders.

Ver. 4.—**And they said.** Being impelled by their success in making bricks for their dwellings (Lange), though the resolution to be mentioned may have been the cause of their brick-making (Bush). **Go to, let us build us a city.** Cf. ch. iv. 17, which represents Cain as the first city builder. **And a tower.** Not as a distinct erection, but as forming a part, as it were the Acropolis, of the city (Bochart). **Whose top may reach unto heaven.** Literally, *and his head in the heavens,* a hyperbolical expression for a tower of great height, as in Deut. i. 28; ix. 1 (cf. Homer, 'Odys.,' v. 239, ἐλάτη τ' ἦν οὐρανομήκης). This tower is commonly identified with the temple of Belus, which Herodotus describes (i. 181) as being quadrangular (two stadia each way), and having gates of brass, with a solid tower in the middle, consisting of eight sections, each a stadium in height, placed one above another, ascended by a spiral staircase, and having in the top section a spacious temple with a golden table and a well-furnished bed. Partially destroyed by Xerxes (B.C. 490), it was attempted unsuccessfully to be rebuilt by Alexander the Great; but the remaining portion of the edifice was known to be in existence five centuries later, and was sufficiently imposing to be recognised as the temple of Belus (Pliny, vi. 30). The site of this ancient tower is supposed by George Smith to be covered by the ruin "Babil," a square mound about 200 yards each way, in the north of the city; and that of the tower of Babel to be occupied by the ruin Birs-Nimrud (situated six miles south-west of Hillah, which is about forty miles west of Bagdad), a tower consisting of seven stages, said by inscriptions on cylinders extracted from the ruin to have been "the Temple of the Seven Planets, which had been partially built by a former king of Babylon, and, having fallen into decay, was restored and completed by Nebuchadnezzar" ('Assyrian Discoveries,' xii. p. 59; 'Chaldæan Genesis,' p. 163; cf. Layard's 'Nineveh and Babylon,' chap. xxii. p. 496). It is, however, *primâ facie,* unlikely that either Babil or Birs-Nimrud is the exact site of Babel. **The** original building was never finished, **and** may not have attained any great dimensions. Perhaps the most that can be said is that

those existing mounds enable us to picture what sort of erection the tower of Babel was to be. **And let us make us a name.** שֵׁם: neither an idol temple, שֵׁם being = God, which it never is without the article, הַשֵּׁם —cf. Levit. xxiv. 11 (Jewish writers); nor a monument, as in 2 Sam. viii. 13 (Clericus); nor a metropolis, reading אֵם instead of שֵׁם, as in 2 Sam. xx. 19 (Clericus); nor a tower that might serve as a sign to guide the wandering nomads and guard them against getting lost when spread abroad with their flocks, as in 2 Sam. viii. 13; Isa. lv. 13 (Perizonius, Dathe, Ilgen); but a name, a reputation, as in 2 Sam. viii. 13; Isa. lxiii. 12, 14; Jer. xxxii. 20; Dan. ix. 15 (Luther, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth, Kalisch). This was the first impelling motive to the erection of the city and tower. The offspring of ambition, it was designed to spread abroad their fame *usque ad ultimos terrarum fines* (Calvin). According to Philo, each man wrote his name upon a brick before he built it in. The second was to establish a rallying point that might serve to maintain their unity. **Lest we be scattered abroad.** Lest = *antequam*, πρὸ, before that, as if anticipating that the continuous increase of population would necessitate their dispersion (LXX., Vulgate), or as if determined to distinguish themselves before surrendering to the Divine command to spread themselves abroad (Luther); but the more exact rendering of פֶּן is *μή*, *ne*, lest, introducing an apodosis expressive of something to be avoided by a preceding action (cf. Gesenius, 'Heb. Gram.,' § 152, and Fürst, 'Lex.,' *sub voce*. What the builders dreaded was not the recurrence of a flood (Josephus, Lyra), but the execution of the Divine purpose intimated in ch. ix. 1, and perhaps recalled to their remembrance by Noah (Usher), or by Shem (Wordsworth), or by Eber (Candlish); and what the builders aimed at was resistance to the Divine will. **Upon the face of the whole earth.** Over the entire surface of the globe, and not simply over the land of Shinar (Inglis), or over the immediate region in which they dwelt (Clericus, Dathe, *et alii, ut supra*).

Ver. 5.—**And the Lord came down.** Not in visible form, as in Exod. xix. 20; xxxiv. 5 (Onkelos), but "*effectu ostendens se propinquiorem quem absentem esse judicabant*" (Poole), an anthropomorphism (cf. ch. xviii. 21; Ps. cxliv. 5). "It is measure for measure (*par pari*). Let us build up, say they, and scale the heavens. Let us go down, says God, and defeat their impious thought" (Rabbi Schelomo, quoted by T. Lewis). **To see** (with a view to judicial action) **the city and the tower which the children of men**—*sons of Adam;* neither the posterity of Cain, *i. e.* the Hamites exclusively, as the Sethites were called sons of God, ch. vi. 2 (Augustine), nor wicked men in general (Junius, Piscator), imitators of Adam, i. e. *rebellantes Deo* (Mede, Lyra), since then the Shemites would not have been participators in the undertaking (Drusius), which some think to have been their work exclusively (Inglis); but the members of the human race, or at least their leaders—**builded.**

Ver. 6.—**And the Lord said**—within himself, and to himself (*vide* ver. 8); expressive of the formation of a Divine resolution (cf. ch. vi. 7)—**Behold, the people**—עָם, from root signifying to bind together, expresses the idea of association; גּוֹי, from a root signifying to swell (Lange), to flow together (Gesenius), to gather together (Fürst), conveys the notion of a *confluxus hominum*. T. Lewis connects it with the sense of interiority, or exclusion, which is common in the Chaldee and Syriac—**is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do.** One race, one tongue, one purpose. The words indicate unity of effort, as well as concentration of design, on the part of the builders, and a certain measure of success in the achievement of their work. **And now nothing will be restrained from them.** Literally, *there will not be cut off from them anything;* οὐκ ἐκλείψει ἀπ' αὐτῶν πάντα (LXX.); *non desistent a cogitationibus suis* (Vulgate, Luther); *i. e.* nothing will prove too hard for their daring. It can hardly imply that their impious design was on the eve of completion. **Which they have imagined to do.**

Ver. 7.—**Go to.** An ironical contrast to the "Go to" of the builders (Lange). **Let us** (cf. ch. i. 26) **go down, and there confound their language** (*vide infra*, ver. 9), **that they may not understand** (literally, *hear;* so ch. xlii. 23; Isa. xxxvi. 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 2) **one another's speech.** Not referring to individuals (*singuli homines*), since then society were impossible, but to families or nations (*singulæ cognationes*), which each had its own tongue (Poole).

Ver. 8.—**So** (literally, *and*) **the Lord scattered them abroad** (as the result of the confusion of their speech) **upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.** *I. e.* as a united community, which does not preclude the idea of the Babylonians subsequently finishing the structure.

Ver. 9.—**Therefore is the name of it called Babel.** For *Balbel*, confusion (σύγχυσις, LXX., Josephus), from *Balal*, to confound; the derivation given by the sacred writer in the following clause (cf. for the elision of the letter *l*, *totaphah* for *tophtaphah*, Exod. xiii. 16, and *cochav* for *covcav*, Gen. xxxvii. 9). Other derivations suggested are *Bab-Bel*, the gate or court of Belus (Eichhorn, Lange), an explanation of the term which Fürst thinks not impossible, and Kalisch declares

"can scarcely be overlooked;" and *Bab-il*, the gate of God (Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Colenso); but the first is based upon a purely mythical personage, *Bel*, the imaginary founder of the city; and the second, if even it were supported by evidence, which it is not, is not so likely as that given by Moses. **Because the Lord did there confound**—how is not explained, but has been conjectured to be by an entirely inward process, viz., changing the ideas associated with words (Koppen); by a process wholly outward, viz., an alteration of the mode of pronouncing words (Hoffman), though more probably by both (Keil), or possibly by the first insensibly leading to the second—**the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them.** As the result not simply of their growing discord, *dissensio animorum, per quam factum sit, ut qui turrem struebant distracti sint in contraria studia et consilia* (Vitringa); but chiefly of their diverging tongues—a statement which is supposed to conflict with the findings of modern philology, that the existing differences of language among mankind are the result of slow and gradual changes brought about by the operation of natural causes, such as the influence of locality in changing and of time in corrupting human speech. But (1) modern philology has as yet only succeeded in explaining the growth of what might be called the sub-modifications of human speech, and is confessedly unable to account for what appears to be its main division into a Shemitic, an Aryan, and a Turanian tongue, which may have been produced in the sudden and miraculous way described; and (2) nothing prevents us from regarding the two events, the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of the nations, as occurring simultaneously, and even acting and reacting on each other. As the tribes parted, their speech would diverge, and, on the other hand, as the tongues differed, those who spoke the same or cognate dialects would draw together and draw apart from the rest. We may even suppose that, prior to the building of Babel, if any of the human family had begun to spread themselves abroad upon the surface of the globe, a slight diversity in human speech had begun to show itself; and the truthfulness of the narrative will in no wise be endangered by admitting that the Divine interposition at Babel may have consisted in quickening a natural process which had already commenced to operate; nay, we are rather warranted to conclude that the whole work of subdividing human speech was not compressed into a moment of time, but, after receiving this special impulse, was left to develop and complete itself as the nations wandered farther and ever farther from the plains of Shinar (cf. Kurtz, 'Hist. of the Old Covenant,' vol. i. pp. 108—117 (Clark's For. Theol. Lib.), and 'Quarry on Genesis,' pp. 195—206).

CHALDÆAN LEGEND OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.—Berosus, indeed, does not refer to it. and early writers are obliged to have recourse to somewhat doubtful authorities to confirm it. Eusebius, *e. g.*, quotes Abydenus as saying that "not long after the Flood, the ancient race of men were so puffed up with their strength and tallness of stature that they began to despise and contemn the gods, and laboured to erect that very lofty tower which is now called Babylon, intending thereby to scale the heavens. But when the building approached the sky, behold, the gods called in the aid of the winds, and by their help overturned the tower, and cast it to the ground! The name of the ruin is still called Babel, because until this time all men had used the same speech; but now there was sent upon them a confusion of many and diverse tongues" ('Praep. Ev.,' ix. 14). But the diligence of the late George Smith has been rewarded by discovering the fragment of an Assyrian tablet (marked K. 3657 in British Museum) containing an account of the building of the tower, in which the gods are represented as being angry at the work and confounding the speech of the builders. In col. i., lines 5 and 6 (according to W. St. C. Boscawen's translation) run—

"Babylon corruptly to sin went, and
Small and great mingled on the mound;"

while in col. ii., lines 12, 13, 14, 15, are—

"In his anger also the secret counsel he poured out
To scatter abroad his face he set
He gave a command to make strange their speech
. . . their progress he impeded."

('Records of the Past,' vol. vii. p. 131; cf. 'Chaldæan Genesis,' p. 160.)

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 4.—*The tower-builders of Babel.* I. THE IMPIETY OF THEIR DESIGN. 1. *Ambition.* They were desirous of achieving fame, or "a name" for themselves. Whether in this there was a covert sneer at the exaltation promised to the Shemites,

or simply a display of that lust of glory which natively resides within the fallen heart, it was essentially a guilty purpose by which they were impelled. In only one direction is ambition perfectly legitimate, viz., in the direction of moral and spiritual goodness, as distinguished from temporal and material greatness (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 31). Only then may the passion for glory be exuberantly gratified, when its object is the living God instead of puny and unworthy self (cf. Jer. ix. 23, 24; 1 Cor. i. 29, 31). 2. *Rebellion.* Setting its head among the clouds, "exalting its throne above the stars," it was designed to be an act of insolent defiance to the will of Heaven. The city and the tower of Babel had their origin in deliberate, determined, enthusiastic, exulting hostility to the Divine purpose that they should spread themselves abroad over the face of the whole earth. And herein lies the essence of all impiety: whatever thought, counsel, word, or work derives its inspiration, be it only in an infinitesimal degree, from antagonism to the mind of God is sin. Holiness is but another name for obedience.

II. THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR ENTERPRISE. The undertaking of the tower-builders was—1. *Sublimely conceived.* The city was to ward off invasion from without, and to counteract disruption from within. Gathering men of a common tongue into a common residence, engaging them in common pursuits, and providing them with common interests was the sure way to make them strong. If this was the creative idea out of which cities sprung, the Cainites, if not pious, must at least have been possessed of genius. Then the tower was to touch the skies. Unscientific perhaps, but scarcely irrational; "an undertaking not of savages, but of men possessed with the idea of somehow getting above nature." And though certainly to aspire after such supremacy over nature in the spirit of a godless science which recognises no power or authority superior to itself was the very sin of these Babelites, yet nothing more convincingly attests the essential greatness of man than the ever-widening control which science is enabling him to assert over the forces of matter. 2. *Hopefully begun.* The builders were united in their language and purpose. The place was convenient for the proposed erection. The most complete preparations were made for the structure. The work was commenced with determination and amid universal enthusiasm. It had all the conditions of success, humanly speaking—one mind, one heart, one hand. 3. *Suddenly abandoned.* "They left off to build the city." So the most prosperous undertakings often terminate in miserable failure. The mighty enterprise was mysteriously frustrated. So have all such wicked combinations in times past been overthrown. Witness the great world empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. So in the end will the great mystery of iniquity, of which that early Babel was the first type.

III. THE INSPECTION OF THEIR WORK. 1. *No work of man can hope to escape the eye of God.* Even now he is minutely acquainted with the thoughts, and words, and works, and ways of every individual on the earth (Prov. xv. 3; Heb. iv. 13), while there is a day coming when "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed" (Matt. x. 26). 2. *Every work of man shall be judged at the bar of God* (Eccles. xii. 14; 1 Cor. iii. 13). The Divine verdict upon human undertakings will often strangely conflict with the judgments of men.

IV. THE CONFUSION OF THEIR TONGUES. 1. As a fact in the experience of the builders, it was—(1) *Unchallengeable.* They could not understand one another, so that they could not doubt that a change of some kind had passed upon their speech; and observation convinces us that as men have now a variety of tongues, something must have broken up the original unity of speech. (2) *Mysterious.* It is not likely that these primitive builders understood how their language had been transmuted. Modern philology has no certain word to utter upon the subject yet. (3) *Supernatural.* It was effected by the immediate agency of God. If even natural causes had begun to operate, they were quickened by the Divine action. Believers in a God who made the tongue of man should have no difficulty in believing in a God who changed the tongue of man. 2. As a judgment on the persons of the builders, it was—(1) *Unexpected in its coming,* as are all God's judgments, like the Flood and like the coming of the Son of man. (2) *Deserved by its subjects.* Caught, as it were, in the very act of insubordination, guilty of nothing short of treason against the King of heaven, they were visited with summary and condign chastisement. So are all God's punishments richly merited by those on whom they fall. (3) *Appropriate in its character.*

It was fitting that they who had abused their oneness of speech, which was designed for their good, to keep them in the Church, should be punished with variety of tongues. (4) *Effectual in its design.* Sent to scatter them abroad, it succeeded in its aim. Man's designs often fail; God's never.

V. THE DISPERSION OF THEIR RANKS. 1. *Judicial in its character.* In its incidence on the builders it wore a punitive aspect. Providences that are full of blessings for the good are always laden with curses to the wicked. 2. *Beneficial in its purpose.* The scattering of the earth's population over the surface of the globe was originally intended for what it has eventually turned out to be, a blessing for the race. 3. *Unlimited in its extent.* Though the original dispersion could not have carried the tribes to any remote distances from Shinar, the process then begun was intended not to rest until the earth was fully occupied by the children of men.

VI. THE MEMORIAL OF THEIR FOLLY. This was—1. *Exceedingly expressive.* The unfinished tower was designated Babel, or Confusion. It is well that things should be called by their right names. The name of Babel was an epitome of the foolish aim and end of the builders. The world is full of such monuments of folly. 2. *Self-affixed.* So God often compels "men of corrupt minds" and "reprobate concerning the faith" not only to manifest, but also to publish, their own folly. 3. *Long-enduring.* It continued to be known as Babel in the days of Moses and long after—an emblem of that shame which shall eventually be the portion of all the wicked.

Learn—1. The sinfulness of ambition. 2. The folly of attempting to resist God. 3. The power of God in carrying out his purposes. 4. The mercy of God in dividing the nations. 5. The ability of God to regather the divided nations of the earth.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—9.—*Order brought forth.* We are now to trace the rise of the kingdom of God among the nations. Already in the case of Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord, that is, by permission of Divine providence, the antagonism between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world has been symbolised. Now we find the concentration of the world's rebellion and ungodliness in the false city, type of the worldly power throughout the Scriptures. It is on the plain of Shinar to which the early migration from the East directed the course of mankind. We are not told at what time the settlement in Shinar took place. As the account of the confusion of tongues is introduced between the larger genealogy and the lesser, we may infer that its object is to account for the spread of nations. Whether we take this Babel to be Nimrod's Babel or an earlier one is of very little consequence. The whole narrative is full of Divine significance. Notice—

I. MAN'S BABEL IS A LYING PRETENSION. It rests on an attempt to substitute his own foundation of society for God's; it is—1. False safety—the high tower to keep above the flood. 2. False ambition—reaching unto heaven, making a name with bricks and mortar. 3. False unity—"lest we be scattered abroad." These are the characteristics of all Babel despotisms. Material foundations to rest upon; lying structures built upon them.

II. GOD'S KINGDOM IS NOT REALLY HINDERED BY MAN'S REBELLION. He suffers the Babel structure to be reared, but by his judgments scatters both the men and their projects, making the rebellious conspiracy against himself prepare the way for his ultimate universal triumph. So it has been all through the history of the world, and especially immediately before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The confusion of tongues was a judgment and at the same time a mercy. Those that are filled with such ambitions and build upon such foundations are not fit to dwell together in one place. It is better they should be divided. The investigations into comparative grammar and the genesis of human language point to some primitive seat of the earliest form of speech in the neighbourhood indicated. It was certainly the result of the false form of society with which men began, the Nimrod empire, that they could not remain gathered in one community; and as they spread they lost their knowledge of their original language, and were confounded because they understood not one another's speech. It is remarkable that in the beginning of the kingdom of Christ, the true city of God which shall overspread the world, the Spirit bestowed the gift of tongues, as if to signify that the Babel of man's lying ambitions was to

cease, and in the truth of the gospel men would be united as one family, "understanding one another's speech."—R.

Ver. 1.—*Unity of language.* 1. The original birthright of the human race. 2. The lost inheritance of sinful men. 3. The ultimate goal of the Christian dispensation. 4. The recovered heritage of redeemed humanity.—W.

Ver. 2.—Note—1. The benefit of a wandering condition. It sometimes prevents the rise of sinful thoughts and wicked deeds. So long as the primitive nomads were travelling from station to station they did not think of either rebellion or ambition. So Israel followed God fully in the wilderness. 2. The danger of a settled state. Established in the fat plain of Shinar, they wanted a city and a tower. So Israel in Canaan waxed fat and kicked. So Moab, having been at ease from his youth, retained his scent unchanged. So comfortable surroundings often lead men from God.—W.

Ver. 3.—*Ancient brickmakers.* I. IN SHINAR. Examples of (1) ingenuity, (2) earnestness, (3) perseverance, (4) unity in sin.

II. IN EGYPT (Exod. v. 7). Illustrations of (1) the bondage, (2) the degradation, (3) the misery, (4) hopelessness, of sin.—W.

Ver. 4.—*The tower of Babel.* I. A MONUMENT OF MAN'S—1. Sinful ambition. 2. Laborious ingenuity. 3. Demonstrated feebleness. 4. Stupendous folly.

II. A MEMORIAL OF GOD'S—1. Overruling providence. 2. Resistless power. 3. Retributive justice. 4. Beneficent purpose.—W.

Ver. 4.—*God's city or man's city.* "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." In the world after the Flood we trace the outlines of the gospel dispensation. To Noah was revealed "good will toward men;" the acceptance of sacrifice; faith as the condition and channel of blessing; and work, to spread the knowledge of and trust in his name, *i. e.* what he is pleased to reveal concerning himself. But "the carnal mind" was there resisting the Spirit. Noah and his seed were to replenish the earth (ch. ix. 1; cf. Mark xvi. 15). They were promised safety from beasts, of whom, if separated, they might be afraid (ch. ix. 2; cf. Matt. x. 29, 31; Luke x. 19). Here was a trial of faith and obedience (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 24). But men had not faith, would not trust, would not go forth at his word. Their calling was to seek God's city (Heb. xi. 10—16), to live as citizens of it (Phil. iii. 20). They chose a city for themselves; earthly security, comforts, luxuries. Called to glorify God's name, their thought was to make a name for themselves. Self was the moving power. The name of God is the trust of his people (Ps. xx. 7; Prov. xviii. 10); a centre of unity to all his children in every place. They trusted in themselves; would be like God to themselves. The tower, the work of their own hands, was to be their centre of unity; and the name of it came to be Babel, *i. e.* confusion (cf. Matt. xv. 13). Love draws mankind together. Self-seeking tends to separation. God bade them spread that they might be united in faith and in work. They chose their own way of union, and it led to dispersion with no bond of unity.

I. WE ARE CALLED TO BUILD THE CITY OF GOD (Heb. xii. 22). To prepare the way for Rev. xxi. 3. The gifts of Christ are made effectual by the work of men. That city, built of living stones (1 Pet. ii. 5), cemented not with slime, but by unity of faith (Ephes. iv. 3). And a tower, a centre of unity, the "good confession" (Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 11). And to obtain a name, to be confessed by the Lord before the angels, to be acknowledged as his "brethren," and stamped with the "new name." And a promise given, as if pointing to Babel: "Your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

II. MANY HAVE NO MIND TO BUILD. They love ease and have no earnestness, triflers with time, or direct their earnestness to earthly prizes—a name among men.

III. EVEN BELIEVERS ARE OFTEN THUS HINDERED. There may be spiritual selfishness along with really spiritual aims. The multitude of cares may distract the soul. Temptations may wear the garb of zeal, or of charity, or of prudence. Watch and pray. God's faithfulness will not fail (1 Cor. x. 13).—M.

Ver. 5.—*The cities of men and the city of God* (Gen. xi. 5; Heb. xi. 16). I. THEIR BUILDERS. Of the first, men—mostly wicked men; of the second, the Architect of the universe.

II. THEIR ORIGIN. Of the first (Enoch, ch. iv. 17; and Babel, ch. xi. 5), hostility to God; of the second, love to man.

III. THEIR DESIGN. Of the first, to be a bond of union among sinners; of the second, to be a residence for God's children.

IV. THEIR APPEARANCE. Of the first, that of slime, mud, bricks, or at best stones; of the second, that of gold and pearls.

V. THEIR DURATION. Of the first, it is written that with all the other works of man, they shall be burnt up; of the second, that it shall be everlasting.—W.

Ver. 6.—*Vain imaginings*—1. Commonly spring from misused blessings. A united people, with a common language, and enjoying a measure of success in their buildings, the Babelites became vain in their imaginings. So do wicked men generally misinterpret the Divine beneficence and leniency which suffers them to proceed a certain length with their wickedness (cf. Rom. i. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 9). 2. Are never unobserved by him against whom they are directed (Deut. xxxi. 21; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9). 3. Are doomed to certain and complete frustration (Ps. ii. 1; Luke i. 51; 2 Cor. x. 5).—W.

Ver. 7.—*Babel and Zion*. 1. Confusion, division, dispersion. 2. Gathering the dispersed, uniting the divided, restoring order to the confused.—W.

§ 6. THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM (CH. XI. 10—26).

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 10.—**These are the generations of Shem.** The new section, opening with the usual formula (cf. ch. ii. 4; v. 1; vi. 9; x. 1), reverts to the main purpose of the inspired narrative, which is to trace the onward development of the line of promise; and this it does by carrying forward the genealogical history of the holy seed through ten generations till it reaches Abram. Taken along with ch. v., with which it corresponds, the present table completes the chronological outline from Adam to the Hebrew patriarch. **Shem was an hundred years old** (literally, *the son of an hundred years*, i. e. in his hundredth year), **and begat Arphaxad.** The English term is borrowed from the LXX., the Hebrew being Arpachshadh, a compound of which the principal part is כשד, giving rise to the Chashdim or Chaldæans; whence Professor Lewis regards it as originally the name of a people transferred to their ancestor (cf. ch. x. 22). **Two years after the flood.** So that in Noah's 603rd year Shem was 100, and must accordingly have been born in Noah's 503rd year, *i. e.* two years after Japheth (cf. ch. v. 32; x. 21). The mention of the Flood indicates the point of time from which the present section is designed to be reckoned.

Ver. 11.—**And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years** (making his life in all 600 years), **and begat sons and daughters** (concerning whom Scripture is silent, as not being included in the holy line).

Vers. 12, 13.—**And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years** (the first indication of a change having transpired upon human life after the Flood, the average age of paternity prior to that event being 117, the earliest 65, and the latest 187), **and begat Salah.** *Shalach*, literally, *emission*, or the sending forth, of water, a memorial of the Flood (Bochart); or of an arrow or dart (*vide* ch. x. 24). **And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years** (making a total of 438, *i. e.* 339 years less than the youngest complete life in the prediluvian table,—Enoch's, of course, being excepted,—and 162 less than Shem's: a second indication of the shortening of the period of existence), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Vers. 14, 15.—**And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber.** Literally, *the region on the other side* (πέραν); from עָבַר, to pass over (cf. ὑπέρ, Greek; *über*, German; *over*, Saxon). The ancestor of the Hebrews (ch. x. 21), so called from his descendants having crossed the Euphrates and commenced a southward emigration, or from the circumstance that he or another portion of his posterity remained on the other side. Prof. Lewis thinks that this branch of the Shemites, having lingered so long in the upper country, had not much to do with the tower building on the plain of Shinar. **And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years** (in all 433 years, or five years less than Arphaxad), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Vers. 16, 17.—**And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg.** *Division;* from *palag*, to divide. For the reason of this cognomen *vide* ch. x. 25. **And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years** (thus reaching the age of 464, the longest-lived of the postdiluvian fathers), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Vers. 18, 19.—**And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu.** *Friend* (sc. of God, or of men), or *friendship;* from a root signifying to pasture, to tend, to care for. Bochart traces his descendants in the great Nisæan plain Ragau (Judith i. 6), situated on the confines of Armenia and Media, and having, according to Strabo, a city named Ragæ or Ragiæ. **And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years** (thus making his entire age 239 years), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Vers. 20, 21.—**And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug.** *Vine-shoot,* from *sarag*, to wind (Gesenius, Lange, Lewis, Murphy); *strength, firmness,* from the sense of twisting which the root bears (Fürst). **And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years** (in all 239), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Vers. 22, 23.—**And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor.** *Panting* (Gesenius); from *nachar*, to breathe hard, to snort. *Piercer, slayer* (Fürst); from an unused root signifying to bore through. **And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years** (or 230 in all), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Vers. 24, 25.—**And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah.** *Terach,* or turning, tarrying; from *tarach*, an unused Chaldæan root meaning to delay (Gesenius); singularly appropriate to his future character and history, from which probably the name reverted to him. Ewald renders *Terach* by "migration," considering *Tarach* = *arach*, to stretch out. **And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years** (148 in all, the shortest liver among the postdiluvian patriarchs), **and begat sons and daughters.**

Ver. 26.—**And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram.** First named on account of his spiritual pre-eminence. If Abram was Terah's eldest son, then, as Abram was seventy-five years of age when Terah died (ch. xii. 4), Terah's whole life could only have been 145 years. But Terah lived to the age of 205 years (ch. xi. 32); therefore Abram was born in Terah's 130th year. This, however, makes it surprising that Abraham should have reckoned it impossible for him to have a son at 100 years (ch. xvii. 17); only, after having lived so long in childless wedlock, it was not strange that he should feel somewhat doubtful of any issue by Sarai. Kalisch believes that Stephen (Acts vii. 4) made a mistake in saying Terah died before his son's migration from Charran, and that he really survived that event by sixty years; while the Samaritan text escapes the difficulty by shortening the life of Terah to 145 years. **And Nahor,** who must have been younger than Haran, since he married Haran's daughter. **And Haran,** who, as the eldest, must have been born in Terah's seventieth year. Thus the second family register, like the first, concludes after ten generations with the birth of three sons, who, like Noah's, are mentioned not in the order of their ages, but of their spiritual pre-eminence.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Names of Patriarchs.	Hebrew Text.			Samaritan.			Septuagint.		
	Age at son's birth.	Rest of life.	Total no. of years.	Age at son's birth.	Rest of life.	Total no. of years.	Age at son's birth.	Rest of life.	Total no. of years.
Shem	100	500	600	100	500	600	100	500	600
Arphaxad	35	403	438	135	303	438	135	400	535
(Καϊνᾶν)							130	330	460
Salah	30	403	433	130	303	433	130	330	460
Eber	34	430	464	134	270	404	134	270	404
Peleg	30	209	239	130	109	239	130	209	339
Reu	32	207	239	132	107	239	132	207	339
Serug	30	200	230	130	100	230	130	200	330
Nahor	29	119	148	79	69	148	179	125	304
Terah	70	135	205	70	75	145	70	135	205
	390			1040			1270		

From this table it appears that 292 years, according to the Hebrew text, passed away between the Flood and the birth, or 292 + 75 = 367 between the Flood and the call of Abraham. Reckoning, however, the age of Terah at Abram's birth as 130 (*vide* Ex-

position), the full period between the Deluge and the patriarch's departure from Haran will be 367 + 60 = 427 years, which, allowing five pairs to each family, Murphy computes, would in the course of ten generations yield a population of 15,625,000 souls; or, supposing a rate of increase equal to that of Abraham's posterity in Egypt during the 400 years that elapsed from the call to the exodus, the inhabitants of the world in the time of Abraham would be between seven and eight millions. It must, however, be remembered that an element of uncertainty enters into all computations based upon even the Hebrew text. The age of Terah at the birth (apparently) of Abram is put down at seventy. But it admits of demonstration that Abram was born in the 130th year of Terah. What guarantee then do we possess that in every instance the registered son was the firstborn? In the case of Arphaxad this is almost implied in the statement that he was born two years after the Flood. But if the case of Eber were parallel with that of Terah, and Joktan were the son that he begat in his thirty-fourth year, then obviously the birth of Peleg, like that of Abram, may have happened sixty years later; in which case it is apparent that any reckoning which proceeded on the minute verbal accuracy of the registered numbers would be entirely at fault. This consideration might have gone far to explain the wide divergence between the numbers of the Samaritan and Septuagint as compared with the Hebrew text, had it not been that they both agree with it in setting down seventy as the age of Terah at the date of Abram's birth. The palpable artificiality also of these later tables renders them even less worthy of credit than the Hebrew. The introduction by the LXX. of Cainan as the son of Arphaxad, though seemingly confirmed by Luke (Luke iii. 35, 36), is clearly an interpolation. It does not occur in the LXX. version of 1 Chron. i. 24, and is not found in either the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Targums or the ancient versions, in Josephus or Philo, or in the Codex Beza of the Gospel of Luke. Its appearance in Luke (and probably also in the LXX.) can only be explained as an interpolation. Wordsworth is inclined to regard it as authentic in Luke, and to suppose that Cainaan was excluded from the Mosaic table either to render it symmetrical, as Luke's table is rendered symmetrical by its insertion, or because of some moral offence, which, though necessitating his expulsion from a Hebrew register, would not prevent his reappearance in his proper place under the gospel.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 10—26.—*From Shem to Abram.* I. THE SEPARATION OF THE GODLY SEED. The souls that constitute the Church of God upon the earth are always, as these Hebrew patriarchs—1. *Known to God;* and that not merely in the mass, but as individuals, or units; nor simply superficially and slightly, but minutely and thoroughly. He knows the fathers they descend from, the families they belong to, the names by which they are designated, the number of years they live, and the children they leave behind them on the earth (cf. Ps. i. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 19). 2. *Separated by God.* This was one of the great ends contemplated by the division of the people which happened in the days of Peleg, which was designed to eliminate the Shemites from the rest of mankind. Then the migration of the sons of Eber contributed further to the isolation of the children of the promise. And, lastly, the selection of the son, not always the firstborn, through whom the hope of the gospel was to be carried on tended in the same direction. So God afterwards separated Israel from the nations. So he still by his providence and his word calls out and separates his people from the world (cf. 1 Kings viii. 53; 2 Cor. vi. 17). 3. *Honoured before God;* by being selected as the vessels of his grace, the channels of his promise, the ministers of his gospel, and the messengers of his covenant, while others are passed by; and by being written in God's book of remembrance, while others are forgotten (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 30; Ps. xci. 15; Mal. iii. 16; Matt. x. 32; 2 Tim. ii. 20; Rev. iii. 5).

II. THE SHORTENING OF HUMAN LIFE. A second characteristic of the postdiluvian era. 1. *A patent fact.* Even Shem, the longest liver of the men of this period, did not continue on the earth so long as Lamech, the shortest liver of the previous age,

by 177 years; while the life of Arphaxad was shorter than that of his father by 162 years, and the days of Terah at the close dwindled down to 205 years. 2. *A potent sermon.* Whether the comparative brevity of life immediately after the Flood was due to any change in the physical constitution of man, or to the altered conditions of existence under the Noachic covenant, or to the gradual deterioration of the race through the lapse of time, or to the direct appointment of Heaven, it was admirably fitted to remind them of—(1) *The reality of sin.* With its penalty descending so palpably and frequently it would seem impossible to challenge the fact of their being a guilty and condemned race. (2) *The necessity of repentance.* Every death that happened would sound like a trumpet-call to sinful men to turn to God. (3) *The vanity of life.* The long terms of existence that were meted out to men before the Flood might tempt them to forget the better country, even an heavenly, and to seek a permanent inheritance on earth; it would almost seem apparent to these short livers that no such inheritance could be obtained below. Alas that the shortness of man's career beneath the sun is now so familiar that it has well nigh ceased to impress the mind with anything! (4) *The certainty of death.* When men's lives were counted by centuries it might be easy to evade the thought of death. When decades came to be enough to reckon up the longest term of existence, it could scarcely fail to remind them that "it was appointed unto all men once to die"

III. THE NEARING OF THE GOSPEL PROMISE. Ten generations further down the stream of time do we see the promise carried in this second genealogical table. It was—1. *A vindication of the Divine faithfulness* in adhering to his promise. Already twenty generations had come and gone, and neither was the promise forgotten nor had the holy line been allowed to become extinct. Ever since Adam's day in Eden the covenant-keeping Jehovah had found a seed to serve him, even in the darkest times, and had been careful to raise up saints who would transmit the hope of the gospel to future times. It was a proof to the passing generations that God was still remembering his promise, and was intending to make it good in the fulness of the times. 2. *A demonstration of God's ability* to keep his promise. Not once through all the bygone centuries had a link been found wanting in the chain of saintly men through whom the promise was to be transmitted. It was a clear pledge that God would still be able to supply the necessary links that might be required to carry it forward to its ultimate fulfilment.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 10—26.—*The order of grace* is—1. Determined by God, and not by man. 2. Arranged after the Spirit, and not according to the flesh. 3. Appointed for the world's good as well as for the Church's safety.—W.

Vers. 10—32.—*Divine traditions.* A genealogy of Shem and of Terah, in order to set forth clearly the position of Abraham and that of his nephew Lot, and their connection with Ur of the Chaldees and Canaan. The chosen family is about to be separated from their country, but we are not told that there was no light of God shining in Ur of the Chaldees. Probably there was the tradition of Shem's knowledge handed down through the generations. Arphaxad was born two years after the Flood; Salah, thirty-seven years; Eber, sixty-seven years; Peleg, one hundred and one years; Reu, one hundred and thirty-one years; Serug, one hundred and sixty-three years; Nahor, one hundred and ninety-three years; Terah, the father of Abraham, two hundred and twenty-two years—no great length of time for traditions to be preserved. The call of Abram was not merely his separation from idolatry, but his consecration to the special vocation of founding the religious ins itutions which were to be connected with his family.—R.

PART III.

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE OF THE WORLD. CH. XI. 27—L. 26.

§ 7. THE GENERATIONS OF TERAH (CH. XI. 27—XXV. 11).

Ver. 27.—**Now** (literally, *and*, intimating the close connection of the present with the preceding section) **these are the generations** —the commencement of a new subdivision of the history (Keil), and neither the winding-up of the foregoing genealogy ('Speaker's Commentary') nor the heading only of the brief paragraph in vers. 27—32 (Lange; *vide* ch. ii. 4)—**of Terah.** Not of Abram; partly because mainly occupied with the career not of Abram's son, in which case "the generations of Abram" would have been appropriate, but of Abram himself, Terah's son; and partly owing to the subsidiary design to indicate Nahor's connection, through Rebekah, with the promised seed (cf. Quarry, p. 415). **Terah begat Abram,** "Father of Elevation," who is mentioned first not because he happened to be Terah's eldest son (Keil), which he was not (*vide* ch. xi. 26), or because Moses was indifferent to the order in which the sons of Terah were introduced (Calvin), but because of his spiritual pre-eminence as the head of the theocratic line (Wordsworth). **Nahor,** "Panting," not to be confounded with his grandfather of the same name (ver. 25). **Haran,** "Tarrying," the eldest son of Terah (ver. 26), and, along with Abram and Nahor, reintroduced into the narrative on account of his relationship to Lot and Milcah. That Terah had other sons (Calvin) does not appear probable. **And Haran begat Lot.** לוֹט; of uncertain etymology, but may be = לוֹט, a concealed, *i. e.* obscure, low one, or perhaps a dark-coloured one (Fürst).

Ver. 28.—**And Haran died before his father.** Literally, *upon the face of his father;* ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ (LXX); while his father was alive (Munster, Luther, Calvin, Rosenmüller); perhaps also in his father's presence (Keil, Lange), though the Jewish fable may be discarded that Terah, at this time an idolater, accused his sons to Nimrod, who cast them into a furnace for refusing to worship the fire-god, and that Haran perished in the flames in his father's sight. The decease of Haran is the first recorded instance of the natural death of a son before his father. **In the land of his nativity.** Ἐν τῇ γῇ ᾗ ἐγεννήθη (LXX.). **In Ur of the Chaldees.** *Ur Kasdim* (ch. xi. 31; xv. 7; Neh. ix. 7). The *Kasdim* —formerly believed to have been Shemites on account of (1) Abram's settlement among them, (2) the preservation of the name *Kesed* among his kindred (ch. xxii. 22), (3) the close affinity to a Shemite tongue of the language known to modern philologists as Chaldee, an Aramæan dialect differing but slightly from the Syriac (Heeren), and (4) the supposed identity or intimate connection of the Babylonians with the Assyrians (Niebuhr)—are now, with greater probability, and certainly with closer adherence to Biblical history (ch. x. 8—12), regarded as having been a Hamite race (Rawlinson, Smith); an opinion which receives confirmation from (1) the statement of Homer ('Odyss.,' i. 23, 24), that the Ethiopians were divided and dwelt at the ends of the earth, towards the setting and the rising sun, *i. e.*, according to Strabo, on both sides of the Arabian Gulf; (2) the primitive traditions (*a*) of the Greeks, who regarded Memnon, King of Ethiopia, as the founder of Susa (Herod., v. 54), and the son of a Cissian woman (Strabo, xv. 3, § 2; (*b*) of the Nilotic Ethiopians, who claimed him as one of their monarchs; and (*c*) of the Egyptians, who identified him with their King Amunoph III., whose statue became known as the vocal Memnon (*vide* Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' vol. i. p. 48); (3) the testimony of Moses of Chorene ('History of Armenia,' i. 6), who connects in the closest way Babylonia, Egypt, and Ethiopia Proper, identifying Belus, King of Babylon, with Nimrod, and making him the son of Mizraim, or the grandson of Cush; and (4) the monumental history of Babylonia, which shows the language of the earliest inscriptions, according to Rawlinson "differing greatly from the later Babylonian," to have been that of a Turanian people (cf. 'Records of the Past,' vol. iii. p. 3). The term *Ur* has been explained to be identical with 'Ir, a city (Rawlinson); the Zend Vare, a fortress (Gesenius); *Ur*, the light country, *i. e.* the land of the sun-rising (Fürst); and even *Ur*,

fire, with special reference to the legendary furnace already referred to (Talmudists). Whether a district (LXX., Lange, Kalisch) or a city (Josephus, Eusebius, Onkelos, Drusius, Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), its exact site is uncertain. Rival claimants for the honour of representing it have appeared in (1) a Persian fortress (Persicum Castellum) of the name of Ur, mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus (lxxv. c. 8) as lying between Nisibis and the Tigris (Bochart, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Delitzsch); (2) the modern Orfah, the Edessa of the Greeks, situated "on one of the bare, rugged spurs which descend from the mountains of Armenia into the Assyrian plains" (Stanley's 'Jewish Church,' i. 7); and (3) Hur, the most important of the early capitals of Chaldæa, now the ruins of Mugheir, at no great distance from the mouth, and six miles to the west, of the Euphrates (Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' i. 15, 16; Smith's 'Assyrian Discoveries,' xii. 233; 'Records of the Past,' vol. iii. p. 9). Yet none of them is quite exempt from difficulty. A military fort, to take the first-named location, does not appear a suitable or likely place for a nomade horde to settle in; while the second has been reckoned too near Charran, the first place of encampment of the emigrants; and the third, besides being exceedingly remote from Charran, scarcely harmonises with Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrim (Acts vii. 2). Unless, therefore, Stephen meant Chaldæa when he said Mesopotamia (Dykes), and Abraham could speak of Northern Mesopotamia as his country (ch. xxiv. 4), when in reality he belonged to Southern Babylonia, the identification of Ur of the Chaldees with the Mugheir ruin though regarded with most favour by archæologists, will continue to be doubtful; while, if the clan march commenced at Edessa, it will always require an effort to account for their coming to a halt so soon after starting and so near home; and the Nisibis station, though apparently more suitable than either in respect of distance, will remain encumbered with its own peculiar difficulties. It would seem, therefore, as if the exact situation of the patriarchal town or country must be left undetermined until further light can be obtained.

Ver. 29.—**And Abram and Nahor took them wives** (cf. ch. vi. 2): **the name of Abram's wife was Sarai.** "My princess," from *sarah*, to rule (Gesenius, Lange); "Strife" (Kalisch, Murphy): "Jah is ruler" (Fürst). The LXX. write Σάρα, changing afterwards to Σάῤῥα to correspond with Sarah. That Sarai was Iscah (Josephus, Augustine, Jerome, Jonathan) has been inferred from ch. xx. 12; but, though receiving apparent sanction from ver. 31, this opinion "is not supported by any solid argument" (Rosenmüller). **And the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah** (Queen, or Counsel), **the daughter of Haran,** *i. e.* Nahor's niece. Marriage with a half-sister or a niece was afterwards forbidden by the Mosaic code (Levit. xviii. 9, 14). **The father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah,** whose name "Seer" may have been introduced into the narrative like that of Naamah (ch. iv. 22), as that of an eminent lady connected with the family (Murphy). Ewald's hypothesis, that Iscah was Lot's wife, is pure conjecture.

Ver. 30. — **But Sarai was barren; she had no child.** Perhaps in contrast to Milcah, who by this time had begun to have a family (Murphy).

Ver. 31.—**And Terah took**—an act of pure human volition on the part of Terah (Kalisch); under the guidance of God's ordinary providence (Keil); but more probably, as Abram was called in Ur (*vide infra*), prompted by a knowledge of his son's call, and a desire to participate in his son's inheritance (Lange)—**Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife.** The Samaritan reads, "and Milcah his daughter-in-law, the wives of Abram and Nahor his sons," with an obvious intention to account for the appearance of Nahor as a settler in Charran (ch. xxiv. 10); but it is better to understand the migration of Nahor and his family as having taken place subsequent to Terah's departure. **And they went forth with them.** *I. e.* Lot and Sarai with Terah and Abram (Keil); or, better, Terah and Abram with Lot and Sarai (Jarchi, Rosenmüller, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'); though best is the interpretation, "and they went forth with each other" (Lange, Kalisch). For the reflexive use of the personal pronoun *vide* ch. iii. 7; xxii. 3, and cf. Gesenius, 'Gram.,' § 124. Other readings are, "and he led them forth" (Samaritan, LXX., Vulgate, Dathius), and "and they (the unnamed members of the family) went forth with those named" (Delitzsch). **From Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan.** Expressive of the Divine destination, rather than of the conscious intention of the travellers (Heb. xi. 8), though Canaan was not at this time unknown to the inhabitants of the Tigris and Euphrates valley (*vide* ch. xiv. 1—12). **And they came into Haran.** *Charran*, Κάῤῥαι, Carrae, in north-west Mesopotamia, about twenty-five miles from Edessa, one of the supposed sites of Ur, and celebrated as the scene of the overthrow of Crassus by the Parthians (B.C. 53). **And dwelt there.** Probably in consequence of the growing infirmity of Terah, the period of their sojourn being differently computed

according as Abram is regarded as having been born in Terah's 70th or 130th year.

Ver. 32.—**And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years.** So that if Abram was born in Terah's 70th year, Terah must have been 145 when Abram left Haran, and must have survived that departure sixty years (Kalisch, Dykes); whereas if Abram was born in his father's 130th year, then Terah must have died before his son's departure from Haran, which agrees with Acts vii. 4. **And Terah died in Haran.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 31.—*The migration of the Terachites.* I. THE DEPARTURE OF THE EMIGRANTS. The attendant circumstances of this migration—the gathering of the clan, the mustering of the flocks, the farewells and benedictions exchanged with relatives and friends, the hopes and fears of the adventurous pilgrims—imagination may depict; the reasons which prompted it may be conjectured to have been—1. *The spirit of emigration*, which since the dispersion at Babel had been abroad among the primitive populations of mankind. The arms of a Trans-Euphratean state had already penetrated as far west as the circle of the Jordan, and it has been surmised that this Terachite removal from Chaldæa may have been connected with some larger movement in the same direction. 2. *The oppression of the Hamites*, who, besides being the most powerful and enterprising of the early tribes, and having seized upon the fattest settlements, such as Egypt, Canaan, and Chaldæa, had wandered farthest from the pure Noachic faith, and abandoned themselves to a degraded polytheism, based for the most part upon a study of the heavenly bodies. That the Cushite conquerors of Southern Babylonia were not only idolaters, but, like Nimrod, their leader, destroyers of the liberties of the subject populations, has at least the sanction of tradition. 3. *The awakening of religious life* in the breasts of the pilgrims. That Abram had by this time been called we are warranted on the authority of Stephen to hold, and though Terah is expressly said to have been an idolater in Ur, it is by no means improbable that he became a sharer in the pure faith of his distinguished son. At least it lends a special interest to this primitive migration to connect it with the call of Abram.

II. THE JOURNEY OF THE EMIGRANTS. Though upon the incidents and experiences of the way, as upon the circumstances and reasons of the departure, the inspired record is completely silent, yet the pilgrimage of the Chaldæan wanderers was—1. *From an idolatrous land*, which could not fail to secure, even had it not already received, the Divine approbation. Not that flight from heathen countries is always the clear path of duty, else how shall the world be converted? But where, as was probably the case with the Terachites, the likelihood of doing good to is less than that of receiving hurt from the inhabitants, it is plainly incumbent to withdraw from polluted and polluting lands. 2. *By an unknown way.* Almost certainly the road to Canaan was but little understood by the exiles, if even Canaan itself was not entirely a *terra incognita*. Yet in setting forth upon a path so uncertain they were only doing what mankind in general, and God's people in particular, have always to do in life's journey, viz., travel by a way that they know not; while for comfort they had the sweet assurance that their path was steadily conducting them from idols and oppression, and the certain knowledge that they were journeying beneath the watchful and loving superintendence of the invisible Supreme. Happy they whose path in life, though compassed by clouds and darkness, ever tends away from sin and slavery, and never lacks the guidance of Abram's God! 3. *To a better country.* In comparison with the rich alluvial soil of Southern Babylonia, the land of Canaan might be only a bleak succession of barren hills; but, in respect of liberty to worship God, anywhere, in the eyes of men whose hearts were throbbing with new-found faith, would seem superior to idolatrous Chaldæa. Without endorsing Luther's fancy, that Shem and his followers had already withdrawn to Palestine, and that Terah and his family were setting forth to place themselves beneath the patriarch's rule, we may reasonably suppose that, like the Pilgrim Fathers of a later age, they were seeking a new land where they might worship God in peace.

III. THE HALTING OF THE EMIGRANTS. In the absence of definite information as to the motives which induced it, this sudden stoppage of their journey at Haran is

usually ascribed to either—1. *The irresolution of Terah*, who, having become wearied by the fatigues and perils of the way, and having found a comfortable location for himself and flocks, preferred to bring his wanderings to a close, as many a noble enterprise is wrecked through weak-kneed vacillation, and many a Christian pilgrimage broken short by faint-hearted indecision; or—2. *The unbelief of Terah*, who, in the first flush of excitement produced by Abram's call, had started on the outward journey with strong faith and great zeal, but, as enthusiasm subsided and faith declined, was easily persuaded to halt at Haran—an emblem of other pilgrims who begin their heavenward journey well, but pause in mid career through the cooling of their ardour and declining of their piety; or—3. *The infirmity of Terah*, who was now an old man, and unable further to prosecute his journey to the promised land, thus making the delay at Haran a beautiful act of filial piety on the part of Abram, and on that of Terah an imperious necessity.

See in this migration of the Terachites—1. An emblem of the changefulness of life. 2. An illustration of God's method of distributing mankind. 3. An example of the way in which an overruling Providence disseminates the truth. 4. A picture of many broken journeys on the face of earth.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 29, 30.—*Two weddings*. I. THE TWO BRIDEGROOMS—Abram and Nahor. 1. Younger sons in Terah's family. 2. Eminent men in Ur of the Chaldees. 3. Favoured saints in the Church of God. Marriage is honourable in all.

II. THE TWO BRIDES—Sarai and Milcah. 1. Near relations of their husbands. Though permissible at that early stage of the world's history, the intermarriage of relatives so close as half-sister and niece is not now sanctioned by the law of God. 2. Attractive ladies in themselves. As much as this may be inferred from their names. It is both allowable and desirable to seek as wives women distinguished for beauty and intelligence, provided also they are noted for goodness and piety. 3. Descendants of the holy line. Doubtless this was one cause which led to the choice of Abram and Nahor. So Christians should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

III. THE TWO HOMES. Formed it might be at the same time, and under similar benignant auspices, they were yet divided. 1. And from the first in their constitutions. This was of necessity. 2. And afterwards in their fortunes. Sarai had no child; Milcah was the mother of a family. "Lo, children are the heritage of the Lord." 3. And eventually in their locations. Nahor and Milcah remained in Ur, and ultimately moved to Haran; Abram and Sarai pitched their tent and established their home in Canaan. So God parts the families of earth.—W.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1—5.—Designed to trace the outward development of God's kingdom on the earth, the narrative now concentrates its attention on one of the foregoing Terachites, whose remarkable career it sketches with considerable minuteness of detail, from the period of his emigration from Chaldæa to his death at Hebron in the land of Canaan. Distinguished as a man of undoubted superiority both of character and mind, the head of at least two powerful and important races, and standing, as one might say, on the threshold of the historical era, it is yet chiefly as his life and fortunes connect with the Divine purpose of salvation that they find a place in the inspired record. The progress of infidelity during the four centuries that had elapsed since the Flood, the almost universal corruption of even the Shemite portion of the human family, had conclusively demonstrated the necessity of a second Divine interposition, if the knowledge of salvation were not to be completely banished from the earth. Accordingly, the son of Terah was selected to be the founder of a new nation, in which the light of gospel truth might be deposited for preservation until the fulness of the times, and through

which the promise of the gospel might be conducted forward to its ultimate realisation in the manifestation of the woman's seed. Partly to prepare him for the high destiny of being the progenitor of the chosen nation, and partly to illustrate the character of that gospel with which he was to be intrusted, he was summoned to renounce his native country and kinsmen in Chaldæa, and venture forth upon an untried journey in obedience to the call of Heaven, to a land which he should afterward receive for an inheritance. In a series of successive theophanies or Divine manifestations, around which the various incidents of his life are grouped—in Ur of the Chaldees (Acts vii. 2), at Moreh in Canaan (Gen. xii. 7), near Bethel (*ibid.* xiii.), at Mamre (*ibid.* xv., xvii.), and on Moriah (*ibid.* xxii.)—he is distinctly promised three things—a land, a seed, and a blessing—as the reward of his compliance with the heavenly invitation; and the confident persuasion both of the reality of these gracious promises and of the Divine ability and willingness to fulfil them forms the animating spirit and guiding principle of his being in every situation of life, whether of trial or of difficulty, in which he is subsequently placed. The miraculous character of these theophanies indeed has been made a ground on which to assail the entire patriarchal history as unhistorical. By certain writers they have been represented as nothing more than natural occurrences embellished by the genius of the author of Genesis (Eichhorn, Bauer, Winer), as belonging to the domain of poetical fiction (De Wette), and therefore as undeserving of anything like serious consideration. But unless the supernatural is to be *in toto* eliminated from the record, a concession which cannot possibly be granted by an enlightened theism, the Divine appearances to Abraham cannot be regarded as in any degree militating against the historical veracity of the story of his life, which, it may be said, is amply vouched for by the harmony of its details with the characteristics of the period to which it belongs (cf. Havernick's 'Introduction,' § 18). Nor does the employment of the name Jehovah in connection with these theophanies warrant the conclusion that the passages containing them are interpolations of a post-Mosaic or Jehovistic editor (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, Davidson). "Such a hypothesis," says Keil, "can only be maintained by those who misunderstand the distinctive meaning of the two names, Elohim and Jehovah (*q. v.* on ch. ii. 4), and arbitrarily set aside the Jehovah in ch. xvii. 1, on account of an erroneous determination of the relation in which El Shaddai stands to Jehovah." Indications of the literary unity of the patriarchal history will be noted, and replies to objections given, in the progress of the Exposition.

Ver. 1.—**Now the Lord.** Jehovah = the God of salvation, an indication that the narrative is now to specially concern itself with the chosen seed, and the Deity to discover himself as the God of redemption. The hypothesis that vers. 1—4 were inserted in the fundamental document by the Jehovist editor is not required for a satisfactory explanation of the change of the Divine name at this particular stage of the narrative. **Had said.** Literally, *said.* In Ur of the Chaldees, according to Stephen (Acts vii. 2), reverting, after the usual manner of the writer, to the original point of departure in the Abrahamic history (Aben Ezra, Mede, Piscator, Pererius, Calvin, Willet, Rosenmüller, Dathius, Alford, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'); or in Haran, after Terah's death, as the first call given to the patriarch (LXX., Chaldee, Syriac, Raschi, Lyra, Keil, Kalisch, Dykes), or as a repetition of the call addressed to him in Ur (Clarke, Wordsworth, Inglis). Luther conjectures that the call in Ur was given "*fortasse per patriarcham Shem;*" but if the authority of Stephen be recognised, this was the occasion of the first theophany vouchsafed to Abram. **Get thee out.** Literally, *go for thyself,* a frequent Hebraism, expressive of the way in which the action of the verb returns upon itself, is terminated and completed (cf. ch. xxi. 16; xxii. 2; Isa. xxxi. 8; Cant. ii. 11; *vide* Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 314); hence, though not necessarily emphatic, it may be equivalent to "Go *thou,*" whoever else remains behind (Jarchi, Ainsworth, Bush). **Of thy country.** A proof that the date of the call was while Abram was in Ur (Calvin), though if Ur was at Edessa (*vide supra*) the patriarch could scarcely have been said to be from home. **And from thy kindred.** At Ur in all probability Nahor and Milcah were left behind; at Haran, Nahor and his family, if they had already arrived thither, and according to some (Kalisch, Dykes) Terah also. **And from thy father's house.** *I. e.* if they will not accompany thee. No Divine interdict forbade the other members of the family of Terah joining in the Abrahamic emigration.

Unto a (literally, *the*) **land that I will show thee**. Through a revelation (Lange), or simply by the guidance of providence. The land itself is left unnamed for the trial of the patriarch's faith, which, if it sustained the proof, was to be rewarded by the exceeding great and precious promises which follow:—according to one arrangement, seven in number, one for each clause of the next two verses (Cajetan, Willet); according to another, four, corresponding to the clauses of the second verse, the last of which is expanded in the third (Keil); according to a third, six, forming three pairs of parallels (Alford); according to a fourth, and perhaps the best, two, a lower or personal blessing, comprising the first three particulars, and a higher or public blessing, embracing the last three (Murphy).

Vers. 2, 3.—**And I will make of thee a great nation.** A compensation for leaving his small kindred. The nation should be great (1) numerically (Keil, Rosenmüller), (2) influentially (Kalisch, Inglis), (3) spiritually (Luther, Wordsworth). **And I will bless thee.** Temporally (Pererius, Murphy), with every kind of good (Rosenmüller), in particular with offspring (Vatablus); but also spiritually (Rupertus, Bush), in the sense, *e. g.*, of being justified by faith, as in Gal. iii. 8 (Candlish). The blessing was a recompense for the deprivations entailed upon him by forsaking the place of his birth and kindred (Murphy). **And make thy name great.** Render thee illustrious and renowned (Rosenmüller); not so much in the annals of the world as in the history of the Church (Bush); in return for leaving thy father's house (Murphy). So God made David a great name (2 Sam. vii. 9; cf. Prov. xxii. 1; Eccles. vii. 8). **And thou shalt be a blessing.** *I. e.* "blessed," as in Zech. viii. 12 (Chaldee, Syriac, LXX., Dathe, Rosenmüller, Gesenius); or "a type or example of blessing," so that men shall introduce thy name into their formularies of blessing (Kimchi, Clericus, Knobel, Calvin); but, best, "a source of blessing (spiritual) to others" (Tuch, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy). The sense in which Abram was to be a source of blessing to others is explained in the next verse. First, men were to be either blessed or cursed of God according as their attitude to Abram was propitious or hostile. **And I will bless them**—grace expecting there will be many to bless (Delitzsch)—**that bless thee, and curse** (with a judicial curse, the word being the same as in ch. iii. 14; iv. 11) **him**—only an individual here and there, in the judgment of the Deity, being likely to inherit this malediction (Delitzsch)—**that curseth** (literally, *treateth lightly*, or *despiseth*. The verb is applied in ch. viii. 11 to the diminution of the waters of the flood) **thee.** The Divine Being thus identifies himself with Abram, and solemnly engages to regard Abram's friends and enemies as his, as Christ does with his Church (cf. Acts i. 4). **And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.** Not bless themselves by thee or in thy name (Jarchi, Clericus); but in thee, as the progenitor of the promised seed, shall all the families of the ground (which was cursed on account of sin, ch. iii. 17) be spiritually blessed—cf. Gal. iii. 8 (Calvin, Luther, Rosenmüller, Keil, Wordsworth, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Thus the second sense in which Abram was constituted a blessing lay in this, that the whole fulness of the Divine promise of salvation for the world was narrowed up to his line, by which it was in future to be carried forward, and at the appointed season, when the woman's seed was born, distributed among mankind.

Ver. 4.—**So** (literally, *and*) **Abram departed**—from Ur of the Chaldees, or from Haran (*vide supra*)—**as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him.** Lot's name being repeated here because of his connection with the ensuing narrative. **And Abram was seventy and five years old**—literally, *a son of five years and seventy years* (cf. ch. vii. 6)—**when he departed**—literally, *in his going forth* upon the second stage of his journey—**from Haran.**

Ver. 5.—**And Abram took** (an important addition to the foregoing statement, intimating that Abram did not go forth as a lonely wanderer, but accompanied by) **Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all the substance**—*recush*, acquired wealth, from *racash*, to gain (cf. ch. xiv. 11, 16, 21; xv. 14), which consisted chiefly in cattle, Lot and Abram being nomads—**that they had gathered** (not necessarily implying a protracted stay, as some allege), **and the souls**—here slaves and their children (cf. Ezek. xxvii. 13)—**that they had gotten**—"not only as secular property for themselves, but as brethren to themselves, and as children of the one heavenly Father" (Wordsworth); that they had converted to the law (Onkelos); that they had proselyted (Raschi, Targum Jonathan, and Jerusalem Targum)—**in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan;**—a prolepsis (cf. ch. xi. 31, *q. v.*)—**and into the land of Canaan they came**—a distance of 300 miles from Haran, from which their course must have been across the Euphrates in one of its higher affluents, over the Syrian desert, southwards to Lebanon and Damascus (cf. ch. xv. 2), where, according to Josephus, the patriarch reigned for some considerable time, "being come with an army from the land of the Chaldæans" ('Ant.,' i. 7), and a village survived to his day called "Abraham's

habitation." According to the partitionists (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, Davidson) this verse belongs to the Elohist or fundamental document; but if so, then the Jehovist represents Abram (ver. 6) as journeying through the land without having previously mentioned what land (cf. Quarry, p. 420).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 4.—*The Chaldæan emigrant.* I. THE CALL OF GOD. Whether spoken in a dream or distinctly articulated by a human form, the voice which summoned Abram to emigrate from Ur was recognised by the patriarch to be Divine; and so is the gospel invitation, which through the medium of a written word has been conveyed to men, essentially a message from the lips of God. The call which Abram received was—1. *Distinguishing and selecting*—coming to him alone of all the members of Terah's family, of all the descendants of the line of Shem, of all the citizens of Ur, of all the inhabitants of earth; and the gospel invitation which men now receive, in its widest no less than in its narrowest acceptation, is differentiating and elective, passing by one nation and falling on another, addressing itself to one individual and allowing another to remain uncheered by its joyful sound (Rom. ix. 16). 2. *Separating and dividing*—summoning the patriarch to disentangle himself from the idolatries of his native land, and even sever his connection with the nearest and the dearest, rather than imperil his salvation by remaining in Chaldæa; and in a like spirit does the voice of Jesus in the gospel direct men to forsake the world (spiritually regarded the land of their nativity), to relinquish its infidelities, iniquities, frivolities; to renounce its possessions, occupations, amusements; yea, to dissolve its friendships and endearing relationships, if they would now be numbered among his disciples, and eventually enter into life (Luke xiv. 26). 3. *Commanding and directing*—enjoining on the patriarch a long and arduous pilgrimage, that must necessarily be attended with many difficulties and dangers, and perhaps with not a few sorrows and privations that would require the most heroic fortitude and the most enduring patience, and that could only be accomplished by minutely following the Divine instructions, and taking each successive step in faith; and of a like character is the journey to which the follower of Christ is invited in the gospel—a journey as painful and laborious in its nature, as much demanding self-sacrifice and heroic resolution, as repugnant to the carnal heart, and as unprofitable to the eye of sense, as uncertain in its various steps, and as much dependent on the principle of faith (2 Cor. v. 7). 4. *Cheering and encouraging*—assigning to the patriarch a number of exceeding great and precious promises which should abundantly compensate for the sacrifices and deprivations that should be entailed upon him by compliance with the heavenly invitation—a great inheritance, a great posterity, a great salvation, a great renown, a great influence; and in the gospel, too, are held forth to stimulate and comfort heaven's pilgrims, a variety of rich rewards that shall more than recompense them for all that they may do or suffer in yielding to the call of Christ.

II. THE FAITH OF ABRAM. As the heavenly invitation which the patriarch received was designed to be symbolic of the gospel call which is addressed to us, so the faith of the patriarch, which responded to the voice of God, was intended for a pattern of that hearty trust with which by us the gospel message should be embraced. The faith of Abram was—1. *Submissive and obedient.* Summoning his household, gathering his flocks, and taking with him his aged father Terah, he departed. Without this indeed he could not have been possessed of faith. Whenever the Divine testimony contains a precept and a promise, the faith that is sincere must yield obedience to the precept as well as cling to the promise. In the gospel message both are present: a promise of salvation, a full, free, and generous offer of eternal life; and along with this a precept of separation from the world, of consecration to a life of faith, holiness, and love; and the second must be obeyed, while the first is embraced to render faith complete. 2. *Prompt and unhesitating.* Without question or complaint, without the slightest shadow of reluctance, so far at least as the narrative reveals, the Chaldæan flock-master puts Jehovah's order into execution; and in this respect again he is worthy of imitation. The same promptitude which he displayed should be exhibited by us in responding to the gospel call, and all the

more that in our case there is less room than there was in his to doubt that the voice which calls is Divine. 3. *Intelligent and reasonable.* Even if Abram had departed from Chaldæa purely *suâ sponte*, in order to escape contamination from its idolatries, instead of being open to a charge of folly because he had gone forth, "not knowing whither he went," he would have been entitled to be regarded as having performed an act of highest prudence. Much more then was his conduct wise and commendable when he was acting in obedience to Heaven's express command—going forth beneath the guidance and protection of Almighty strength and Omniscient love. And just as little can Christian faith be challenged as fanatical and rash, possessing as it does the same sanction and supervision as that of the father of the faithful. 4. *Patient and persevering.* Delayed at Haran, the traveller was not diverted from his path. Undaunted by prospective perils, he had left Chaldæa to go to a land which God was to show him; unconquered by actual hardships and trials, he halted not till he set his foot within the promised land. And so we learn that faith to begin the Christian life is not enough; not he who commences the heavenward pilgrimage, but he who endureth to the end, shall be saved.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—5.—*The preparations of grace.* We may call this the genesis of the kingdom of God.

I. It is FOUNDED in the word of the Divine covenant, the faith given by Divine grace to individuals, the separation unto newness of life.

II. The one man Abram gathers round him a small SOCIETY, kindred with him by the flesh, but bound to him doubtless by spiritual bonds as well. Thus God has sanctified the family life by making it as the nidus of the spiritual genesis. When the new kingdom began its course in the Messiah, he drew to himself those who were previously associated by neighbourhood, relationship, and familiar intercourse in Galilee. The Divine does not work apart from the human, but with it and by it.

III. The PROMISE was that of Abram should be made a great nation, that he should be blessed and a blessing, and his blessing should be spread through all families of the earth. The structure which Divine grace rears on the foundation which itself lays is a structure of blessed family and national life.

IV. The land of CANAAN may not have been indicated with positive certainty to the migrating children of God, but it was enough that he promised them a land which he would hereafter show them. "A land that I will show thee." There was the certainty that it was a *better* land: Get thee out of thy country, because I have another for thee. The day-by-day journey under Divine direction was itself a help to faith to make the promise definite. The stay at Haran, from whence the pilgrimage might be said to make a true start, was itself a gathering of "souls" and "substance" which predicted a large blessing in the future. When once we have followed the word of God's grace and set our face towards Canaan we soon begin to get pledges of the future blessings, laid-up riches of soul and substance, which assure us of the full glory of the life to come.

V. Even in that first beginning of the kingdom, that small Church out of Ur of the Chaldees, there is the evidence of that individual VARIETY OF CHARACTER AND ATTAINMENT and history which marks the whole way of the people of God. Lot was a very different man from Abram. As the story of this little company of travellers develops itself we soon begin to see that the grace of God does not obliterate the specialities of human character. Out of the varieties of men's lives, which to us may seem incapable of reconciliation, there may yet be brought the onward progress of a Divine order and a redeeming purpose.—R.

Ver. 1.—*The voices of God at the opening of the world's eras.* I. AT THE OPENING OF CREATION. "And God said, Let there be light."

II. AT THE OPENING OF REDEMPTION. "And God said, I will put enmity between thee and the woman," &c.

III. AT THE OPENING OF THE OLD DISPENSATION. "And God said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country."

IV. At the opening of the Christian era. "And God said, This is my beloved Son."

V. At the opening of the eternal state God will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."—W.

Ver. 1.—*Abraham called.* "Now the Lord God had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country," &c. The record of Abraham's life is second only in beautiful simplicity to that of Christ. There are certain correspondences between the two.

I. A summons was given to Abraham. It was from the Lord. We know not the form. It was explicit. He was to leave all. It was an *unmistakable* summons, and it was repeated. Such calls are generally opposed to carnal inclinations. Dangers beset the one who should respond to the call, for "the Canaanite was then in the land."

II. The summons was sustained by a promise of guidance to *the* land. The first call was to a land, the second to a definite place. God did not at first tell Abraham that he would give him the land, but only "show" it. God does not reveal all the riches of his grace at once. The promise was sufficient. Abraham went forth from the plain of Chaldea to the land which God would make through him and his descendants the most renowned in the world. Ever listening to a voice unheard by others Abraham was led. Sublime faith of the patriarch; he looked for "a city that had foundations."—H.

Ver. 2.—*Abraham useful.* "And thou shalt be a blessing." This is part of the sixfold promise given to Abraham. He was to be a blessing to all nations. It is a very great joy to a devout soul to become a blessing temporally or spiritually to others.

I. Every man of faith is a centre of blessing. Men who yield to their carnal natures cannot bless others. The Christian should not incidentally, but intentionally, bless others. Where a man is corrupt his working will be injurious; purity is a benediction to mankind.

II. A devout and faithful man is a blessing chiefly to those who can receive his influence. The light of the sun causes one substance to decay, another to fructify. The life of a servant of God may only provoke a sneer and opposition in some souls; but in others joy, thankfulness, love, and effort at imitation. To some an apostle was "a savour of death unto death."

III. The measure of our faith is the measure of the blessing we shall transmit to others. We sometimes hinder the operation of God's promise by our self-righteous humility, which ignores the fact that God often uses the "weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." There must be faith in God's continued working. He can make the future fruitful in proportion to our faith. Look at what he made of Paul, Luther, Wesley, and Whitfield because they were all men of strong faith.

IV. To be a blessing through the power and favour of God is the highest honour in the world. It was God who "made" Abraham a blessing; he gave him the power, fostered his faith, and perpetuated his influence. What honour could Abraham have comparable with this? It is probable that Abraham thought little of the honour which would come to him; but God adapted his promise to that which he knew to be the desire of the secret soul of Abraham. Seeing a longing in the heart to lift men to a higher level, he gratifies it by making Abraham a blessing. All should cherish such desires. The help we can give to others morally is far greater than that we can bestow materially. To live an aimless life is a disgrace and sin, but to live to bless others is Divine.—H.

Vers. 2, 3.—*Sevenfold promises.* I. Of the pre-incarnate Jehovah to Abram. 1. A great inheritance. 2. A great posterity. 3. A great name. 4. A great blessing. 5. A great alliance. 6. A great defence. 7. A great influence.

II. Of the incarnate Word to his disciples. 1. The kingdom of heaven. 2. Divine consolation. 3. Inheritance of the earth. 4. Divine satisfaction. 5. Divine mercy. 6. The vision of God. 7. A place in God's family (see Matt. v. 1—9).

III. OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH. 1. The tree of life. 2. A crown of life. 3. Hidden manna, the white stone, and a new name. 4. Power over the nations, and the morning star. 5. White raiment. 6. The distinction of being made a pillar in God's temple. 7. A seat on Christ's throne (see Rev. ii., iii.).—W.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 6.—**And Abram passed through**—literally, *passed over*, or travelled about as a pilgrim (cf. Heb. xi. 9) in—**the land unto** (or as far as) **the place of Sichem.** A prolepsis for the place where the city Shechem (either built by or named after the Hivite prince, ch. xxxiv. 2) was afterwards situated, viz., between Ebal and Gerizim, in the middle of the land; "the most beautiful, perhaps the only very beautiful, spot in Central Palestine" (Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' v. 234). The modern name of Sichem is Nâblus, a corruption of Neapolis. **Unto the plain.** אֵלוֹן, from אוּל or אַיִל, to be strong, a strong, hardy tree: the terebinth, as opposed to the oak, אַלּוֹן, from אָלַל (Celsius, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Keil); the oak, as distinguished from אֵלָה, the turpentine tree, or terebinth (Gesenius, Kalisch, Murphy). But it seems demonstrable that these and the other cognate terms, אַיִל, אֵלָה, are frequently used as synonymous for any large, strong tree (cf. ch. xxxv. 5; Judges ix. 9; xxiv. 26; Josh. xix. 33 with Judges iv. 11), though commonly אַלּוֹן, oak, is opposed to אֵלָה, terebinth, as in Isa. vi. 13; Hosea iv. 13. The translation of אֵלוֹן by plain (Targums, A. V.) is inaccurate, though "the truth is it was both a plain and set with oaks" (Willet). **Of Moreh.** Like Mamre (ch. xiii. 18), the name of the owner of the oak-grove (Murphy, Kalisch, Alford); probably a priestly character (Moreh signifying a teacher, Judges vii. 1; 2 Kings xvii. 28; Isa. ix. 15) who instituted the Divine cultus in the locality (Luther); though it has also been regarded as the name of the place (Calvin), which may be here given to it by anticipation (Wordsworth), being derived from *raah*, to see, and equivalent to the place of vision (Samaritan), because God there appeared to the patriarch (Fagius), and showed him the land of Canaan (Masius, Lyra). Knobel renders "the oak of the teacher," comparing it with "the oak of the witches" (Judges ix. 37). The LXX. translate by ὑψηλήν, lofty, and the Vulgate by *illustrem.* **And the Canaanite was then in the land.** A sign of post-Mosaic authorship (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso); an interpolation (Aben Ezra; rather (1) a proclamation of the miserable exile in which the patriarch lived (Luther); or (2) a reminder to Abram of his heavenly country, seeing he was a stranger in his earthly one (Calvin); or, better, (3) an intimation of the fact that *already* the Canaanites were in possession of the land which bore their name (Kalisch), or perhaps simply (4) a declaration that the land was not a stretch of unoccupied territory, but a populated region (Hengstenberg), thus making the fulfilment of the ensuing promise all the more difficult, and all the greater a trial to the faith of the patriarch (Keil, Murphy, Wordsworth, Alford); or (5), but not so good, an explanation of the previous selection of the oak of Moreh as his habitation (Lange, Hävernick, *vide* Introduction, § 18).

Ver. 7.—**And the Lord appeared.** The first mention of a theophany, though Acts vii. 2 alleges that such a Divine manifestation had previously occurred in Ur of the Chaldees. Though not a direct vision of Jehovah (John i. 18), that there was some kind of outward appearance may be inferred from the subsequent Divine manifestations to the patriarch (ch. xviii. 2, 17, 33; xxii. 11—18), to Hagar (ch. xvi. 7—14; xxi. 17, 18), and to Jacob (ch. xxxi. 11—13; xxxii. 24—30). On the relation of the angel of Jehovah to Jehovah *vide* ch. xvi. 17. **Unto Abram.** "Jam pæne fatigato Abraha isto duro exsilio et perpetuis migrationibus" (Luther). **And said, Unto thy seed**—to himself God gave "none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts vii. 5); the land was promised to his seed "when as yet he had no child"—**will I give this land** Now occupied by the Canaanites. Undoubtedly a great promise, that the Canaanites should be dispossessed, and their country given to the offspring of a childless old man already over seventy-five years. The apparent improbability of its ever being accomplished rendered it a strong trial to the patriarch's faith. **And there builded he an altar.** "Constituit certum locum, in quo conveniat ecclesia, auditura verbum Dei, factura preces, laudatura Deum, sacrificatura Deo' (Luther). "Altare forma est Divini cultus; invocatio autem substantia et veritas" (Calvin). "The rearing of an altar in the land was, in fact, a form of taking possession of it on the ground of a right secured to the exercise of his faith" (Bush). "It is often said of Abraham and the patriarchs that they built altars to the Lord; it is never said they built houses for themselves" (Wordsworth). **Unto the Lord who had appeared to him.**

Ver. 8. —**And he removed** — literally, *caused* (i. e. his tent) *to be broken up* (cf. ch. xxvi. 22—**from thence**—no cause for which being assigned, the hostility of his neighbours (Luther, Calvin) and the commencement of the famine (Alford, Keil) have been conjectured as the probable reasons—**unto a** (literally, *the*) **mountain east of Bethel.** Here proleptically named "house of God," being called in the time of Abram Luz (ch. xxviii. 19). Its present name is Beitin. **And pitched his tent** (cf. ch. ix. 21), having **Bethel on the west**—literally, *sea-ward*, the Mediterranean being the western boundary of Palestine (cf. ch. xxviii. 14; Exod. x. 19; xxvi. 22; Ezek. xlviii. 1, 2)—**and Hai—Ai** (עַי; עַיָּא, Neh. xi. 31; עַיָּת, Isa. x. 28); with the article, because signifying "the heap of ruins," near which it was no doubt built; the scene of the first Israelitish defeat under Joshua (ch. vii. 2): its ruins still exist under the name of *Medinet Gai*—**on the east** (about five miles from Bethel): **and there he builded an altar unto the Lord** (*vide supra*), **and called upon the name of the Lord** (*vide* ch. iv. 26).

Ver. 9.—**And Abram journeyed** (literally, *broke up*, e. g., his encampment), **going on still**—literally, *going on and breaking up* (cf. ch. viii. 3); "going and returning"—**towards the south.** *Negeb*, the dry region, from *nagabh*, to be dried, the southern district of Palestine (ch. xiii. 3; xx. 1; xxiv. 62). The LXX. render, ἐστρατοπέδευσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.

Of this section vers. 5, 6, 8*a* are commonly assigned to the Elohist; and 7, 8*b*, and 9 to the Jehovist.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 6—10.—*The promised land.* I. WANDERINGS. Entering Canaan from the north, the Chaldæan emigrant directs his progress steadily towards the south, removing from station to station till he reaches the furthest limit of the land. This wandering life to the patriarch must have been (1) *unexpected.* Leaving Ur at the Divine command, and journeying many hundreds of miles, he must have eagerly anticipated rest in Canaan; but instead he finds that he must journey still. So is life to God's people always full of disappointments. Yet was it also (2) *inevitable.* The land was in possession of the Canaanites, and, even though it had been free and untenanted, it was famine-stricken, both of which circumstances necessitated frequent removal. And for causes not dissimilar must the saints ever wander, the world for the most part belonging to their enemies, and the produce of earth being insufficient to meet their souls' needs. Then to the patriarch himself it was meant to be (3) *prophetic.* The promised land being designed not so much for a possession in itself as for an emblem of the better country towards which his spirit with its new-found faith was travelling, it was not intended that life in Canaan for the father of the faithful should be one of absolute repose, but rather one of wandering and unrest; and of that he had a foretaste, or earnest, immediately he stepped across the borders of the land. And still further was it purposed to be (4) *emblematic.* In the fortunes of Abram it was contemplated that God's believing people in every age should behold, in main characteristic at least, an outline or shadow of their own. As to him the land of Canaan was not the better country, but only its anticipation, so to them is it not so much a type of heaven as of the visible Church, and the patriarchal wanderings an emblem not of the beatific life of the redeemed in glory, but of the experiences of the saints on earth.

II. TRIALS. Along with ceaseless peregrinations, more or less exacting in their nature, trials of another and severer sort entered into the texture of the patriarch's experience in the promised land. The peculiar circumstances in which he found himself were such as to make a vehement assault upon his faith. 1. *His childless condition* seemed to render all but impossible belief in the mighty nation of which Jehovah talked. And so are saints sometimes tempted to indulge a suspicion of the Divine goodness and veracity, because of the absence of certain creature comforts which they see God bestowing upon others. 2. *The occupation of the land* appeared to negative the idea of its ever becoming his; and not unfrequently because a saint cannot discern how a promise is to be fulfilled, he begins to challenge the Divine resources, and ends by impeaching the Divine faithfulness. 3. *The prevalence of famine* was calculated to excite doubts in his mind as to whether after all the land was worth either having or desiring; and in this life the saints are not unacquainted with temptations, arising from the pressure of outward circumstances, such as extreme

poverty or long-continued affliction, to admit the apprehension that after all the blessings of religion and the glories of the future life may not be worth the sacrifices made to secure them.

III. CONSOLATIONS. If a field of wanderings and a scene of trials, the promised land was likewise a place of consolation. Abram enjoyed—1. The comfort of *the Divine presence.* Though unseen, the companionship of Jehovah was understood by the patriarch to be a grand reality on which he might depend; and so says Christ to his believing people, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." 2. The joy of *Divine manifestations.* As Jehovah appeared to Abram, probably in the form of a man, so already has God appeared to his Church in the person of the man Christ Jesus; and so does Christ promise still to appear spiritually to his people, and to disclose to them the treasures of his grace and love (John xiv. 21). 3. The consolation of *Divine worship.* Wherever Abram wandered he built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord who had appeared unto him; and without any altar may the saint at any moment enter into closest communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, who in the fulness of the times was manifested to take away our sins, and who is ever ready, through the medium of his Holy Spirit, to interpose for his people's aid.

Learn—1. That a saint's wanderings are of God's appointing. 2. That a saint's trials are of God's permitting. 3. That a saint's consolations are of God's sending.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 6—9.—*Revelations.* We here enter upon the more special history of Divine appearances. Hitherto the word is described simply as a word—"The Lord said;" now we connect with the word distinct appearances. The plain of Moreh will be ever memorable as the first scene of such revelations. The altar which Abram erected was to the Lord who appeared unto him, *i. e.* in commemoration of the vision. Thus the long line of theophanies commences. The great lesson of this record is the worship of man proceeding from the gracious revelation of God. True religion is not a spontaneous product of man's nature, but rather a response to God's grace. He appears; the believer to whom the vision is vouchsafed raises an altar not "to the unknown God," but to the God who has appeared to him. Another point in the record is the connection of the promise with the revelation. The Lord appeared, and when he appeared he gave his word of promise: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Are we not reminded thus early in the history of religion that for its maintenance there is required not only a revelation to the mind and heart by the Spirit, but also a seat of its institutions and community? Religion without a people of God dwelling in the land of privilege, and bound together by the sacred bonds of a Divine fellowship, is no true religion at all. Abram builds altars at the various stages of his pilgrimage, still going south. Although we are not told of a distinct vouchsafement of God in connection with every altar, we may well suppose, especially as the "mountain" is specified, that the altars marked out not mere resting-places, but the scenes of special communion with Jehovah.—R.

Ver. 6.—*The first wanderer and the second, or Cain and Abram compared and contrasted.* I. COMPARED. Each wandered—1. From the place of his nativity—Cain from Eden, Abram from Ur. 2. Accompanied by his wife, who in each instance was his sister. 3. In obedience to the word of Jehovah. He who called Abram had previously banished Cain. 4. Beneath the protection of Heaven—Cain defended by his scarred brow, Abram shielded by the arm of God. 5. To the close of life; neither finding a permanent habitation on the earth.

II. CONTRASTED. While both wandered—1. The one, Cain, travelled from God; the other, Abram, journeyed with God.. 2. The one roamed across the face of earth; the other walked within the borders of the promised land. 3. The one fled beneath the curse of Heaven; the other was o'ercanopied by Heaven's favour. 4. The one was an emblem of the sinner seeking rest and finding none; the other was a picture of the saint, who must travel through the world to his home.

Lessons:—1. There are wanderings and wanderings among men upon the earth. 2. He who would not become a fugitive like Cain must, like Abram, become a pilgrim. 3. They who choose the lot of Abram need never fear the doom of Cain.—W.

Vers. 6—20.—*The strength and weakness of Abram.* I. A THREEFOLD SOURCE OF STRENGTH. 1. His enjoyment of gracious visits from God. 2. His exercise of faith in God. 3. His cultivation of communion with God.

II. A THREEFOLD SOURCE OF WEAKNESS. 1. An unwarrantable fear of man. 2. A heedless reliance on worldly policy and craft. 3. A sinful preference of self-interest to the happiness and welfare of others.—W.

Ver. 7.—*Abraham worshipping.* "And there he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." Abraham is at length Divinely informed that he is *in* the land hereafter to be his. He was at the spot where the great temple, to be set up by his descendants, would stand. Here he builds an altar. It was doubtless a very plain altar of rough stones, but large enough for the sacrifices to be offered. It would have little attraction in the eyes of many, but it would be approved of by God.

I. IT WAS REARED ENTIRELY IN THE HONOUR OF GOD. There was no self-glorifying in it. It was erected as a spontaneous act of gratitude. The men of Babel by the tower-building sought to get themselves a name; Abraham by his altar-building seeks to honour God's name. His act was a protest against the prevalent and surrounding idolatry. This was the first altar reared in Canaan to the great I AM.

II. IT WAS AN EXPRESSION OF ABRAHAM'S DESIRE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIVINE GUIDANCE IN HIS PAST LIFE. He found it a joy to be under the leadership of God. "Wherever Abraham had his tent God had his altar." In how many families is the altar in need of repair! In many it has not even been set up.

III. IT EXPRESSED ABRAHAM'S DEPENDENCE ON THE MERCY REVEALED THROUGH A PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE. He evidently believed in an atonement. He offered an heifer, goat, ram, turtle-dove, and pigeon. After the rude manner of that day he offered sacrifices for his own sins and for those of his household. He found that God was brought nearer through the sacrifice, even as we discover that fact through the Christ of Calvary.

IV. IT EXPRESSED ALSO ABRAHAM'S READINESS TO CONSECRATE HIMSELF ENTIRELY TO GOD. An altar that failed to express this would have been a mockery. God is not flattered by an outward show of reverence. He must have inner and absolute consecration if we are to know the heights of spiritual power.

V. IT EXPRESSED THE PATRIARCH'S FAITH IN THE FULFILMENT OF THE DIVINE PROMISES. Abraham was already in the land of promise, and could leave the future to his God. He was, by rearing that altar, taking possession of the land for himself, and of the world for God, even as Columbus, with befitting pomp, planted in the newly-discovered continent a cross, and named the land San Salvador, thus consecrating it to the holy Saviour.—H.

Ver. 8.—*Abraham's altar.* "And there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord." There is a solemn word (Matt. x. 32, 33). The distinction is not between Christians and heathen; it is within the visible Church. To confess Christ is more than professing Christianity. It must be in the life, not merely in religious services. No doubt these have their use; without them spiritual life would wither and die, like a light under a vessel. They are as food; but "the life is more than meat." The world acquiesces in such services as respectable and proper. But it is a poor Christianity that raises no opposition. A Christian life may constrain respect, but it must differ from worldly (1) as to its object—*first* the kingdom of God; (2) as to its means—God's promises and help trusted to as real. Mark Abraham's example: dwelt among Canaanites on sufferance; they idolaters. Prudence would suggest keeping his religion secret. Many try to keep their faith secret; afraid to confess it, but unwilling to give it up. In vain; faith ashamed of brings no comfort or strength. Abram did not hide his faith. Wherever he sojourned he built an altar; confessed whom he trusted. We are told

—1. He built an altar, *i. e.* made open confession of his faith. 2. "Called on the name," &c., *i. e.* spoke to God as a living person, a real helper.

I. WHAT IS IT TO CONFESS GOD? 1. In the heart; firmly to believe what he has revealed. His promises were given to be trusted. The fool puts away belief (Ps. xiv. 1). It may be from dislike of truth (cf. Rom. i. 28); it may be despondingly (cf. Gen. xlii. 36), afraid to take God at his word. The voice of true wisdom, Ps. lxii. 1, 2. 2. In the life; acting upon "ye are not your own." We cannot go far without being tried: in business, in companionship, in bearing what we do not like, in resisting self-will and self-seeking, in standing firm against the world's scorn or well-meant persuasions. Passing events constantly put the question whom we serve (cf. Dan. iii. 15; Acts v. 28, 29). And not merely in matters that seem great. Little things show whom we have first in our hearts.

II. CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THIS IS CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD. We must look below the surface. Among professing Christians some prayer is a matter of course; but is it used as a real means to obtain? It is one thing to believe the doctrine of God's providence, and of the use of prayer, and another to pray as a practical power and to feel our Father's care. Yet St. Paul connects prayer and peace (Phil. iv. 6, 7). When Hannah had prayed she was no more sad (1 Sam. i. 18). The Bible has many encouragements to pray, but not one warning against asking too much.

III. EFFECT OF THIS ON THE CHARACTER. Abraham's character as eminently faithful was built up by exercising faith. He walked with God not by any constraining power, nor by reason of special manifestations; then he would be no example for us. Each acknowledgment of God increased his communion. Each altar marked a step in his own life, and a work in the world. He who is faithful in little gains more power (cf. Matt. xiii. 12).—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 10.—**And there was a famine.** רָעָב, from a root signifying to hunger, the primary idea appearing to lie in that of an ample, *i. e.* empty, stomach (Gesenius, Fürst). The term is used of individuals, men or animals (Ps. xxxiv. 11; l. 12); or of regions (Ps. xli. 55). **In the land.** Of Canaan, which, though naturally fertile, was, on account of its imperfect cultivation, subject to visitations of dearth (cf. ch. xxvi. 1; xli. 56), especially in dry seasons, when the November and December rains, on which Palestine depended, either failed or were scanty. The occurrence of this famine just at the time of Abram's entering the land was an additional trial to his faith. **And Abram went down to Egypt.** Mizraim (*vide* ch. x. 6) was lower than Palestine, and celebrated then, as later, as a rich and fruitful country, though sometimes even Egypt suffered from a scarcity of corn, owing to a failure in the annual inundation of the Nile. Eichhorn notes it as an authentication of this portion of the Abrahamic history that the patriarch proposed to take himself and his household to Egypt, since at that time no corn trade existed between the two countries such as prevailed in the days of Jacob (*vide* Hävernick's Introduction, § 18). The writer to the Hebrews remarks it as an instance of the patriarch's faith that he did not return to either Haran or Ur (Heb. xi. 15, 16). **To sojourn there.** To tarry as a stranger, but not to dwell. Whether this journey was undertaken with the Divine sanction and ought to be regarded as an act of faith, or in obedience to his own fears and should be reckoned as a sign of unbelief, does not appear. Whichever way the patriarch elected to act in his perplexity, to leave Canaan or reside in it, there was clearly a strain intended to be put upon his faith. **For the famine was grievous** (literally, *heavy*) **in the land.**

Vers. 11—13.—**And it came to pass** (literally, *it was*), **when he was come near to enter into Egypt** (that he had his misgivings, arising probably from his own eminence, which could scarcely fail to attract attention among strangers, but chiefly from the beauty of his wife, which was calculated to inflame the cupidity and, it might be, the violence of the warm-blooded Southrons, and) **that he said unto Sarai his wife.** The arrangement here referred to appears (ch. xx. 13) to have been preconcerted on first setting out from Ur or Haran, so that Abram's address to his wife on approaching Egypt may be viewed as simply a reminder of their previous compact. **Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon.** Literally, *fair of aspect* (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 42). Though now upwards of sixty-five years of age, she was still in middle life (ch. xxiii. 1), and her

constitution had not been impaired by bearing children. Besides, the clear complexion of Sarah would render her specially attractive in the eyes of the Egyptians, whose women, though not so dark as the Nubians and Ethiopians, were yet of a browner tinge than the Syrians and Arabians. Monumental evidence confirms the assertion of Scripture that a fair complexion was deemed a high recommendation in the age of the Pharaohs (*vide* Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 200). **Therefore** (literally, *and*) **it shall come to pass, when** (literally, *that*) **the Egyptians**—notorious for their licentiousness (*vide* P. Smith's 'History of the World,' vol. i. ch. vi. p. 71)—**shall see thee, that** (literally, *and*) **they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me**—in order to possess thee, counting murder a less crime than adultery (Lyra). An unreasonable anxiety, considering that he had hitherto enjoyed the Divine protection, however natural it might seem in view of the voluptuous character of the people. **But** (literally, *and*) **they will save thee alive**—for either compulsory marriage or dishonourable use. **Say, I pray thee,** —translated in ver. 11 as "now;" "verbum obsecrantis vel adhortantis" (Masius)—**thou art my sister.** A half truth (ch. xx. 12), but a whole falsehood. The usual apologies, that he did not fabricate, but "cautiously conceal the truth" (Lyra), that perhaps he acted in obedience to a Divine impulse (Mede), that he dissembled in order to protect his wife's chastity (Rosenmüller), are not satisfactory. On the other hand, Abram must not be judged by the light of New Testament revelation. It is not necessary for a Christian in every situation of life to tell all the truth, especially when its part suppression involves no deception, and is indispensable for self-preservation; and Abram may have deemed it legitimate as a means of securing both his own life and Sarah's honour, though how he was to shield his wife in the peculiar circumstances it is difficult to see. Rosenmüller suggests that he knew the preliminary ceremonies to marriage required a considerable time, and counted upon being able to leave Egypt before any injury was done to Sarah. The only objection to this is that the historian represents him as being less solicitous about the preservation of his wife's chastity than about the conservation of his own life. **That it may be well** (not with thee, though doubtless this is implied, but) **with me for thy sake** (the import of which is declared in the words which follow); **and my soul shall live because of thee.** "No defence can be offered for a man who, merely through dread of danger to himself, tells a lie, risks his wife's chastity, puts temptation in the way of his neighbours, and betrays the charge to which the Divine favour had summoned him" (Dykes).

Vers. 14, 15.—**And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also**—literally, *and the princes* (שָׂרֵי, mas. of Sarah), chief men or courtiers, who, in accordance with the ancient custom of Egypt that no slave should approach the priestly person of Pharaoh, were sons of the principal priests (*vide* Hävernick, § 18)—**of Pharaoh.** The official title of the kings of Egypt (cf. Cæsar, the designation of the Roman emperors, and Czar, that of the Emperor of Russia), who are never introduced in the Pentateuch, as in later books, by their individual names (1 Kings iii. 1; ix. 40); an indirect evidence that the author of Genesis must at least have been acquainted with the manners of the Egyptian Court. The term Pharaoh, which continued in use till after the Persian invasion—under the Greek empire the Egyptian rulers were styled Ptolemies—is declared by Josephus to signify "king" ('Ant.,' viii. 6, 2), which agrees with the Koptic Pouro (*Pi-ouro;* from *ouro*, to rule, whence *touro*, queen), which also means king. Modern Egyptologers, however, incline to regard it as corresponding to the *Phra* of the inscriptions (Rosellini, Lepsius, Wilkinson), or to the hieroglyphic *Peraa*, or *Perao*, "the great house" (M. de Rougé, Brugsch, Ebers), an appellation which belonged to the Egyptian monarchs, and with which may be compared "the Sublime Porte," as applied to the Turkish sultans (cf. Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary,' vol. i. p. 477). The particular monarch who occupied the Egyptian throne at the time of Abram's arrival has been conjectured to be Necao (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' v. ix. 4), Ramessemenes (Syncellus, p. 101), Pharethones (Euseb., 'Praep. Ev.,' ix. 8), Apappus (Wilkinson, 'Anc. Egypt.,' vol. i. p. 13, note 5, Dr. Birch's edition), Achthoes, the sixth king of the eleventh dynasty (Osburn, 'Mon. Hist. of Egypt,' vol. i. ch. vii. p. 375), Salatis or Saïtas, the first king of the fifteenth dynasty, whose reign commenced B.C. 2080 (Stuart Poole in 'Smith's Dict.,' art. Pharaoh), a monarch belonging to the sixteenth dynasty of shepherd kings (Kalisch), and a Pharaoh who flourished between the middle of the eleventh and thirteenth dynasties, most probably one of the earliest Pharaohs of the twelfth (Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary,' vol. i. p. 447). Amid such conflicting testimony from erudite archæologists it is apparent that nothing can be ascertained with exactitude as to the date of Abram's sojourn in Egypt; though the last-named writer, who exhibits the latest results of scholarship on the question, mentions in support of his conclusion a variety of considerations that may be profitably studied. **Saw her.** So that she **must have been unveiled, which agrees with**

monumental evidence that in the reign of the Pharaohs the Egyptian ladies exposed their faces, though the custom was discontinued after the Persian conquest (*vide* Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 199). **And commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken.** *Capta* (Targum of Jonathan), *rapta* (Arab.), *abducta* (Pagnini), *capta et deducta* (Rosenmüller); all implying more or less the idea of violence, which, however, besides being not warranted by the text, was scarcely likely in the circumstances, the king being perfectly honourable in his proposals, and Abram and Sarai by their deception having rendered it impossible to object without divulging their secret. **Into Pharaoh's house.** Or harem, with a view to marriage as a secondary wife. Cf. the Papyrus D'Orbiney, now in the British Museum, but belonging to the age of Rameses II., in which the Pharaoh of the time, acting on the advice of his counsellors, sends two armies to fetch a beautiful woman by force, and then to murder her husband. A translation by M. Renouf will be found in The Tale of the Two Brothers, in 'Records of the Past,' vol. ii. p. 138.

Ver. 16.—**And he entreated Abram well**—literally, *did good to Abram; εὖ ἐχρήσαντο* (LXX., Hieronymus, Poole) supposes that the court of Pharaoh or the Egyptian people generally conferred favours on the patriarch, which is not at all so probable as that Pharaoh did—**for her sake.** Marriage negotiations in Oriental countries are usually accompanied by presents to the relatives of the bride as a sort of payment. "The marriage price is distinctly mentioned in Scripture (Exod. xxii. 15, 16; Ruth iv. 10; 1 Sam. xviii. 23, 25; Hosea iii. 2); was commonly demanded by the nations of antiquity, as by the Babylonians (Herod., i. 196), Assyrians (Ælian V. H., iv. 1; Strabo, xvi. 745), the ancient Greeks ('Odyss.,' viii. 318 ff.), and the Germans (Tacit., 'German.,' xviii.); and still obtains in the East to the present day" (*vide* Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Marriage, by Dr. Ginsburg). **And he had**—literally, *there was* (given) *to him*—**sheep, and oxen.** Flocks of small cattle and herds of larger quadrupeds, together constituted the chief wealth of nomads (cf. ch. xiii. 5; Job i. 3). **And he asses.** *Chamôr*, so named from the reddish colour which in southern countries belongs not only to the wild, but also to the common or domestic, ass (Gesenius). The mention of asses among Pharaoh's presents has been regarded as an "inaccuracy" and a "blunder," at once a sign of the late origin of Genesis and a proof its author's ignorance of Egypt (Bohlen, Introd., ch. vi.); but (1) asses were among the most common of Egyptian animals, a single individual, according to Wilkinson (vol. iii. p. 34), possessing sometimes as many as 700 or 800; and (2) it is certain that asses appear on the early monuments (cf. 'Records of the Past,' vol. ii. p. 26). **And men-servants, and maid-servants, and she asses.** *Athôn;* from *athan*, to walk with short steps; so named from its slowness (ch. xxxii. 16), though "the ass in Egypt is of a very superior kind, tall, handsome, docile, swift" (Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Egypt). **And camels.** *Gāmāl* (from *gāmāl*, to repay, because the camel is an animal that remembers past injuries (Bochart), or from a cognate Arabic root *hamala*, meaning he or it carried, with reference to its being a beast of burden (Gesenius); both of which derivations Stuart Poole declares far-fetched, and proposes to connect the term with the Sanskrit *kramêla*, from *kram*, to walk or step, which would then signify the walking animal (*vide* Kitto, art. Camel). Cf. with the Hebrew the Sanskrit as above, the Arab *jemel* or *gemel*, the Egyptian *ϭjamoul*, Greek *κάμηλος*, Latin *camelus*) is the well-known strong animal belonging to Palestine (Ezra ii. 67), Arabia (Judges vii. 12), Egypt (Exod. ix. 3), Syria (2 Kings viii. 9), which serves the inhabitants of the desert for travelling (ch. xxiv. 10; xxxi. 17) as well as for carrying burdens (Isa. xxx. 6), and for warlike operations (ch. xxi. 7), and in which their riches consisted (Job i. 3; xlii. 21). Though the camel does not thrive well in Egypt, and seldom appears on the monuments, the historian has not necessarily been guilty of an "inaccuracy and a blunder" in assigning it to Abram as one of Pharaoh's presents (Bohlen); for (1) the camel thrives better in Egypt than it does anywhere else out of its own proper habitat; (2) if camels were not generally kept in Egypt, this Pharaoh may have been "one of the shepherd kings who partly lived at Avaris, the Zoan of Scripture," a region much inhabited by strangers (Poole in Kitto, art. Camel); and (3) if camels have not been discovered among the delineations on the monuments, this may have been because of its connection with the foreign conqueror of Egypt, which caused it to be regarded as a beast of ill omen; though (4) according to Heeren they do appear on the monuments (Hävernick, § 18, p. 142). That horses, though the glory of Egypt, were not included among the monarch's gifts was doubtless owing to the fact that they could not have been of much service to the patriarch.

Ver. 17.—**And the Lord plagued** (literally, *struck*) **Pharaoh and his house with great plagues** (or *strokes*, either of disease or death, or some other calamity—an indication that Pharaoh was not entirely innocent) **because of Sarai Abram's wife.** The effect of this was to lead to the discovery, not through the aid of the Egyptian priests (Josephus), but either through a special revelation granted

to him, as afterwards (ch. xx. 6) to Abimelech in a dream (Chrysostom), or through the confession of Sarai herself (A Lapide), or through the servants of Abraham (Kurtz).

Vers. 18, 19.—**And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What** is **this** that **thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me she** was **thy wife?** In which case we are bound to believe the monarch that he would not have taken her. **Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife** (which as yet he had not done; an indirect proof both of the monarch's honourable purpose towards Sarai and of Sarai's unsullied purity): **now therefore behold thy wife, take** her, **and go thy way.** According to Josephus ('Bell. Jud.' v. ix. 4) Sarah was only one night in Pharaoh's house; but this is obviously incorrect.

Ver. 20.—**And Pharaoh commanded** his **men** (*i. e.* certain officers designated for the purpose) **concerning him** (to see to his departure): **and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.**

The partitionists assign this entire section to the Jehovist.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 10.—*The descent into Egypt.* I. THE STORY OF A GOOD MAN'S FALL. 1. *Experiencing disappointment.* Arrived in Canaan, the patriarch must have felt his heart sink as he surveyed its famine-stricken fields and heathen population; in respect of which it was so utterly unlike the fair realm of his imaginings. So God educates his children, destroying their hopes, blighting their expectations, breaking their ideals, "having provided some better thing for them," some loftier and more beautiful ideal than they have ever ventured to conceive. 2. *Declining in faith.* In presence of the famine the patriarch must have found himself transfixed upon the horns of a terrible dilemma. The promised land, to all appearance, was only fit to be his grave, like the wilderness, in later years, to his descendants. To return to Ur or Haran was impossible without abandoning his faith and renouncing Jehovah's promise. The only harbour of refuge that loomed before his anxious vision was the rich corn-land of Egypt, and yet going into Egypt was, if not exhibiting a want of trust in God, voluntarily running into danger. So situated, unless the spiritual vision of the patriarch had suffered a temporary obscuration he would not have quitted Canaan. A calm, steady, unwavering faith would have perceived that the God who had brought him from Chaldæa could support him in Palestine, even should his flocks be unable to obtain pasture in its fields; and, besides, would have remembered that God had promised Canaan only to himself, and not at all to his herds. 3. *Going into danger.* The descent into Egypt was attended by special hazard, being calculated not only to endanger the life of Abram himself, but also to jeopardise the chastity of Sarai, and, as a consequence, to imperil the fulfilment of God's promise. Yet this very course of action was adopted, notwithstanding its peculiar risks; another sign that Abram was going down the gradient of sin. Besides being in itself wrong to court injury to our own persons, to expose to hurt those we should protect, or occupy positions that render the fulfilment of God's promises dubious, no one who acts in either of these ways need anticipate the Divine favour or protection. Saints who rush with open eyes into peril need hardly look for God to lift them out. 4. *Resorting to worldly policy.* Had Abram and Sarai felt persuaded in their own minds that the proposed journey southwards entirely met the Divine approval, they would simply have committed their way to God without so much as thinking of "crooked ways." But instead they have recourse to a miserable little subterfuge of their own, in the shape of a specious equivocation, forgetting that he who trusts in his own heart is a fool, and that only they whom God keeps are perfectly secure. 5. *Practising deception.* Cunningly concocted, the little scheme was set in operation. Crossing into Egypt, the Mesopotamian sheik and his beautiful partner represented themselves as brother and sister. It is a melancholy indication of spiritual declension when a saint condescends to equivocate, and a deplorable proof of obliquity of moral vision when he trusts to a lie for protection. 6. *Looking after self.* Anxious about his wife's chastity, the patriarch, it would appear, was much more solicitous about his own safety. The tendency of sin is to render selfish; the spirit of religion ever leads men to prefer the interests of others to their own, and in particular to esteem a wife's happiness and comfort dearer than life. 7. *Caught in his own toils.*

The thing which Abram feared actually came upon him. Sarai's beauty was admired and coveted, and Sarai's person was conducted to the royal harem. So God frequently "disappoints the devices of the crafty," allows transgressors to be taken in their own net, and causes worldly policy to outwit itself.

II. The story of a good man's protection. 1. *God went down with Abram into Egypt.* Considering the patriarch's behaviour, it would not have been surprising had he been suffered to go alone. But God is always better to his people than their deserts, and, in particular, does not abandon them even when they grieve him by their sins and involve themselves in trouble by their folly. On the contrary, it is at such times they most require his presence, and so he never leaves them nor forsakes them. 2. *God protected Sarai in Pharaoh's house.* Not perhaps for Sarai's or Abram's sake, who scarcely deserved consideration for the plight into which they had fallen, but for his own name's sake. The fulfilment of his own promise and the credit, as it were, of his own character necessitated measures for securing Sarai's honour. Accordingly, the house of Pharaoh was subjected to heavy strokes of affliction. So God can protect his people in every time and place of danger, and always finds a reason in himself, when he is able to discover none in them, for interposing on their behalf. 3. *God delivered both in his own time and way.* To all God's afflicted ones deliverance sooner or later comes. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations," and how to make a way of escape when his time arrives.

III. The story of a good man's reproof. 1. *By his own conscience.* Profoundly ashamed must the patriarch have been when he reflected on Sarai's peril in the house of Pharaoh, and on his own craven spirit which had bartered her good name for the sake of saving his own skin. It is difficult to harmonise with conscientious qualms his acceptance of the monarch's gifts. But if Abram had any manhood left after parting with Sarai, besides being humiliated before God for his wickedness, he must have been dishonoured in his own eyes for what looked like selling a wife's purity for flocks and herds. No doubt conscience exacted vengeance from the guilty soul of the patriarch, as it does from that of every sinner. 2. *By his unbelieving neighbour.* Though not entirely guiltless, Pharaoh was unquestionably less blameworthy than Abram. And yet Abram was a saint who had been favoured with Divine manifestations and enriched with Divine promises; whereas Pharaoh was a heathen, a consideration which must have added keenness to the pang of shame with which the patriarch listened to the monarch's righteous rebuke. So Christians by their worldly craft, mean duplicity, and gross selfishness, if not by their open wickedness, occasionally expose themselves to the merited censures of irreligious neighbours.

Learn—1. That the best of men may fall into the greatest of sins. 2. That the worst of sins committed by a saint will not repel the grace of God. 3. That the severest of the world's censures are sometimes deserved by the Church.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 10—20.—*The Church and the world.* The genesis of intercourse and controversy between the kingdom of God and the world power, as represented in the great southern kingdom of Egypt.

I. The pressure of earthly necessities forms the occasion of the sojourn in Egypt. We are not told that Abram was sent by Divine direction amongst the temptations of the South; still there is providential protection even where there is not entire Divine approval. The Lord suffers his people to mingle with the world for their trial, and out of the evil brings ultimate good. Abram went for corn, but obtained much more—the wealth and civilisation of Egypt.

II. Sojourn in the midst of worldly power generally involves some compromise of spiritual liberty, some lowering of spiritual principle. Jehovah's servant condescends to prevarication and dissembling not for protection only, but "that it may be well with him." The danger to Sarai and to Abram was great. All compromise is danger.

III. In the subordinate sphere of social morality there have been many instances of conscience acting more powerfully where the light of truth has shone less clearly. Pharaoh was a heathen, but he compares to advantage with Abram. Notice that these early plagues of Egypt mentioned in ver. 17 were very different from the later, although they illustrate the same truth, that by means of judgments God preserves his people and carries forward his kingdom, which is the truth exhibited in every apocalypse.

IV. The dismission of the little company of believers from Egypt was at the same time judgment and mercy. The beginning of that sojourn was wrong, the end of it was disgraceful. A short stay among the world's temptations will leave its results among the people of God, as the subsequent history testifies. Abram became very rich, but his riches had been wrongly obtained. There was trouble in store for him. God's method is to perfect his people not apart from their own character and ways, but by the gracious ordering of their history, so that while good and evil are mingled together, good shall yet ultimately be triumphant.—R.

Ver. 10.—*Famines.* 1. Not even the Holy Land is exempt from famine. Neither is the saint's condition free from suffering, nor the believer's portion on earth from defects. 2. Lands naturally fertile can be rendered barren by a word from God. So circumstances that might conduce to the Church's comfort can be made to disappear when God wills. 3. The drought was sent on Canaan just as Abram arrived. So God often sends his judgments on the world for the sake of his people, and can always time them to meet their spiritual necessities. 4. Famines never come in all lands together, for that were a violation of the covenant; and so neither do God's judgments fall on all men or all saints at once, for that too were to gainsay his promise.—W.

Ver. 13.—*Abraham and carnal policy.* "Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister: that it may be well with me." These words were partially true (ch. xi. 20). Abraham had real ground for saying that Sarah was his sister, but he hid the fact that she was his wife. He asked her to consent to an equivocal statement and to repeat it.

I. Contemplate the nature of carnal policy. A truth which is part a lie is ever a dangerous lie. The temptation to this carnal policy came (1) from his mingling with the worldly Egyptians on equal terms, (2) from his very prosperous state, and (3) from his having lately come from a religious observance in which he had had high spiritual revelations. Possibly he presumed upon his visions and the Divine promises. David fell also shortly after he had attained the kingdom and been delivered from great dangers.

II. See how all carnal policy is sure in the long run to fail. Abraham did not foresee all the consequences of his equivocations. He even made the path clear for Pharaoh to ask for Sarah. He had afterwards to know that his name was a by-word among the Egyptians. (1) He lost self-respect; (2) he had to be rebuked by a Pharaoh, and (3) to feel that God was dishonoured by his act. Abraham repeated his sin. That God delivered Abraham should teach us that we are not to reject others, who have committed a special sin, as past hope. God does not cast us off for one sinful action. Still Divine forbearance and love should never lead to presumption and to a tampering with carnal policy.—H.

Ver. 20.—*Abram and Israel; a parallel.* 1. Both were driven into Egypt by a famine. 2. To both the land of Egypt proved a house of bondage. 3. In each case the Pharaoh of the time was subjected to plagues. 4. Both were sent away by the alarmed monarchs who were made to suffer for their sakes. 5. Both went up from Egypt laden with the spoils of those among whom they had sojourned. 6. On leaving Egypt both directed their steps to Canaan.—W.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1.—**And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife.** A special mercy that either of them returned, considering the sin they had committed and the peril in which they had been placed. **And all that he had.** Referring principally to the souls, "domestici" (Poole), acquired in Haran (ch. xii. 5, 16), his material wealth being mentioned afterwards. **And Lot** (who does not appear in the preceding paragraph, no part of which relates to him, but is now reintroduced into the narrative, the present portion of the story being connected with his fortunes) **with him into the south** (sc. of Canaan, *vide* ch. xii. 9).

Ver. 2. —**And Abram was very rich.** Literally, *weighty;* used in the sense of abundance (Exod. xii. 38; 1 Kings x. 2; 2 Kings vi. 14). **In cattle.** *Mikneh,* from *kana,* to acquire by purchase, may apply to slaves as well as cattle (cf. ch. xvii. 12, 13, 23). **In silver and gold.** Mentioned for the first time in Scripture; implying an acquaintance among the Egyptians with the operations of mining and the processes of refining the precious metals. Cf. the instructions of Amenemhat I., which speak of that monarch, belonging to the twelfth dynasty, as having built for himself a palace adorned with gold (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. ii. p. 14).

Vers. 3, 4.—**And he went on his journeys.** Literally, *in his journeyings* or stations (cf. ch. xi. 2; Exod. xvii. 1; Num. x. 6, 12). The renderings *καὶ ἐπορεύθη ὅθεν ἦλθεν* (LXX.) and *reversus est per iter quo venerat* (Vulgate) imply without warrant that he used the same camping grounds in his ascent which he had previously occupied in his descent. **From the south even to Bethel** (*vide* ch. xii. 8), **unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning.** Before his demigration into Egypt, *i. e.* not to Shechem, the site of his first altar, where probably he had not encamped for any length of time, if at all, but to a spot **between Bethel and Ai** (the exact situation being more minutely described as) **unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first.** After entering the promised land. In reality it was the second altar he had erected (*vide* ch. xii. 7, 8). **And there Abram called on the name of the Lord.** Professed the true and pure worship of God (Calvin); preached and taught his family and Canaanitish neighbours the true religion (Luther). *Vide* ch. xii. 8; iv. 26.

Vers. 5, 6.—**And Lot also** (literally, *and also to Lot*), **who went with Abram** (literally, *going with Abram*), **had** (*were*) **flocks and herds and tents.** The uncle's prosperity overflowed upon the nephew. Rosenmüller includes in the tents the domestics and servants, *qui in tentoriis degebant* (cf. 1 Chron iv. 41). **And the land was not able to bear them.** Literally, *did not bear,* i. e. support their households and flocks. **That they should dwell together.** In consequence partly of the scarce pasturage, the land probably having not yet sufficiently recovered from the drought, but chiefly because of their increasing wealth. **For their substance** (*vide* ch. xii. 5) **was great, so that they could not** (literally, *and they were not able to*) **dwell together.**

Ver. 7.—**And there was a strife** (originating doubtless in the scarcity of pasture, and having for its object the possession of the best wells and most fertile grounds) **between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite**—the lowlander (*vide* ch. ix. 22; xii. 6)—**and the Perizzite**—the highlander, or dweller in the hills and woods of Palestine (Josephus, Bochart); in the open country and in villages, as opposed to the Canaanites, who occupied walled towns (Kalisch, Wordsworth; a tribe of wandering nomads (Murphy), the origin of whose name is lost in obscurity (Keil), who, though not mentioned in ch. x., are commonly introduced with the Canaanites (Gen. xv. 20; xxxiv. 30; Exod. iii. 8, 17), as dividing the land between them, and are probably to be regarded as the remnant of an early Shemite race displaced by the Hamite invaders of Palestine. Their introduction here is neither a sign of post-Mosaic authorship nor an interpolation, but an explanation of the difficulty of finding pasture — the land was occupied (*vide* ch. xii. 6)—**dwelt then in the land.**

Ver. 8.—**And Abram said unto Lot.** Perceiving probably that Lot's face was not towards him as usual, and being desirous to avert the danger of collision between his nephew and himself. **Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and** (*i. e.* either identifying himself and his nephew with their subordinates, or fearing that the strife of their subordinates might spread to themselves, hence, as) **between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.** Literally, *men brethren* (cf. ch. xi. 27, 31; Exod. ii. 13; Ps. cxxxiii. 1). Abram and Lot were kinsmen by nature, by relationship, and by faith (*vide* ch. xi. 31; 2 Pet. ii. 7).

Ver. 9.—**Is not the whole land before thee?** The Bethel plateau commands an extensive view of Palestine (*vide* on ver. 10).

Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. Thus giving Lot the choice of the country. **If thou wilt take the left hand** (literally, *if to the left hand* (sc. thou wilt go), the Hebrew term being in the accusative after a verb of motion (Kalisch, p. 344)—**then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 9.—*The magnanimity of Abram.* I. WHEN IT WAS EVOKED. 1. *On returning to the land of Canaan.* Departing into Egypt, the better nature of the patriarch became obscured and enfeebled, and he himself became the subject of timorous emotions, the deviser of guileful machinations, and the perpetrator of unworthy actions; retracing his erring footsteps to the holy soil, he seems as it were immediately to have recovered the nobility and grandeur of soul which he had lost in the land of Ham. When saints wander into sinful ways they inflict a hurt upon their spirits from which they cannot recover till they seek the good old paths. Sublime deeds of spiritual heroism are not to be expected at the hands of believers who conform to the world. The true champions of the faith, who by their personal behaviour can illustrate its godlike character, are only to be found among those who walk as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and do not stray from God's commandments. 2. *After having committed a great sin.* The recoil which Abram's spirit must have experienced when, in the light of God's merciful interposition, he came to perceive the heinous nature of the transgression into which his fears had betrayed him in Egypt, had doubtless something to do with the lofty elevation of soul to which he soon afterwards climbed upon the heights of Bethel. So oftentimes a saint, through grace, is profited by his backslidings. The memory of the matter of Uriah had its influence in ripening the piety of David, and the recollection of the judgment-hall of Pilate assisted Peter to a height of spiritual fortitude he might not otherwise have attained. 3. *After an experience of rich mercy.* After all, God's kindnesses to Abram and Sarai were the principal instrumentalities that quickened the better nature of the patriarch; and so it is generally in proportion as we meditate upon and partake of Divine mercy that our hearts are ennobled and enabled. It is the love of God in Christ that constrains a saint to holy and unselfish deeds.

II. HOW IT WAS OCCASIONED. 1. *By the danger of collision between himself and Lot.* The strife which had arisen between his nephew's herdsmen and his own was liable, unless promptly extinguished, to communicate its bad contagion to himself and Lot. But the patriarch, with that insight which belongs to simple minds, discerned a method of avoiding so unseemly a calamity, and, with that self-forgetful heroism which ever characterises noble souls, had the fortitude and magnanimity to put it into execution. It indicates an advanced stage of Christian maturity when what might prove temptations to sin are, by spiritual discernment and unshrinking self-sacrifice, transformed into occasions for holy acting and suffering. 2. *By the necessity of separation which had come on him and Lot*, which necessity was owing—(1) To their increasing wealth. If the present history shows that good men may become rich, and sometimes in dubious ways, it also reveals that wealth has its dangers. The character of Lot was demonstrably injured by prosperity; while if Abram escaped corruption through wealth, that wealth was indirectly the power which deprived him of his kinsman. It is a poor bargain when one grows rich at the expense of his better nature, as did Lot; or even, like Abram, at the expense of affection. Better remain poor and keep friends than become rich and lose friends! (2) To the quarrels of their servants. Though possibly occasioned by devotion to their masters' interests, the contention of the herdsmen was wrong. Not even for the sake of employers should workmen and dependents become involved in strife. And still less should masters and mistresses become entangled in the wranglings of employés and domestics. Better part than fight!

III. BY WHAT IT WAS PRECEDED. 1. *By a solemn act of devotion.* Suitable at all seasons, prayer is specially needful and becoming in times of danger and trial like those in which the patriarch was situated. Nothing is better calculated to soothe the troubled heart, to allay irritation, to prevent strife, to enable the assaulted spirit

to resist temptation, to brace the soul for arduous duty and magnanimous self-renunciation, than communion with God. Had Abram's discernment of the growing danger to which he and Lot were exposed, and Abram's contemplation of the necessity of yielding Lot the choice of the land their influence in taking him back to Bethel with its altar? 2. *By an earnest deprecation of the rising strife.* If the Spirit's fruits will not flourish in the stagnant marsh of a dead soul, neither will they in the breast of an angry Christian. A peaceful mind and a quiet heart are indispensable pre-requisites to grace's motions. Heavenly virtue cannot prosper in an atmosphere of wrath and contention. But where saints cultivate a gentle and forgiving spirit it is not uncommon to find them strengthened to perform deeds of holy valour. The conciliatory disposition of the elder of the two travellers was an admirable preparation for, almost a foreshadowing of, the magnanimous act that followed; as the perpetuation of the strife or the indulgence of anger on the part of Abram would have rendered it impossible.

IV. IN WHAT IT WAS DISPLAYED. 1. *A sublime act of self-renunciation.* (1) In preferring Lot's interests to his own, though Lot was the younger, and a dependent on himself, and in a manner only in the land by sufferance; in this exemplifying the very spirit which Christ and his apostles afterwards enjoined upon New Testament believers (Matt. xx. 26; Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 3); and (2) in renouncing Canaan for the sake of peace, which was practically what he did when he gave Lot the choice of the land, the greatness of which act of self-abnegation appears when it is remembered that already God had given him the land, so that he, and not Lot, was entitled to elect to what quarter he should turn, and that this concession of his rights was intended to disarm Lot's hostility, and preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. 2. *A signal illustration of self-resignation,* in which, when he beheld the meanness of Lot, and saw the best portion of the soil abstracted from him, there was neither a display of feeling towards his nephew nor the uprising of a pang of discontentment and regret at the result, but the most humble and self-satisfied acquiescence in what he knew to be the allotment of Heaven.

Learn—1. That soul-wealth is greater than material prosperity. 2. That a man becomes spiritually rich in proportion as he practises self-renunciation. 3. That the higher one rises in true spiritual greatness, the less is he affected by the loss of earth's goods.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—13.—*The separation between Abram and Lot.* [Return to Bethel—to the altar. The circumstances of the patriarch were very different. He was very rich. Lot is with him, and the sojourn in Egypt had far more depraving effect upon his weaker character than upon that of his uncle. We should remember when we take the young into temptation that what may be comparatively harmless to us may be ruinous to them. The subsequent misery of Lot's career may be all traced to the sojourn in Egypt.]

I. The root of it lay in WORLDLY WEALTH LEADING TO CONTENTION. "They could not dwell together."

II. THE DIVERGENCE OF CHARACTER IS BROUGHT OUT IN THE COMPLICATION OF EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Lot is simply selfish, wilful, regardless of consequences, utterly worldly. Abram is a lover of peace, a hater of strife, still cherishes the family feeling and reverences the bond of brotherhood, is ready to subordinate his own interests to the preservation of the Divine order, has faith to see that Canaan with the blessing of God is much to be preferred to the plain of Jordan with Divine judgments hanging over those who were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

III. LESSONS OF PROVIDENCE ARE NOT LOST ON THOSE WHO WAIT UPON GOD, and can be learnt in spite of infirmities and errors. Abram could not forget what Egypt had taught him; rich as he was, he did not put riches first. He had seen that that which seems like a garden of the Lord in external beauty may be a cursed land after all. There are people of God who pitch their tents towards Sodom still, and they will reap evil fruits, as Lot did. It is a most terrible danger to separate ourselves from

old religious associations. In doing so we cannot be too careful where we pitch our tent.—R.

Ver. 8.—*Abraham, the peaceable man.* "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee." Abraham had a nephew who attached himself to his fortunes and shared his fate. Food, fodder, and water became scarce. The flocks of Lot and of Abraham are more than the land can sustain; the herdsmen of each strive together. Servants will often be more bitter towards the servants of a rival of their master, than those immediately concerned. Pathetic is the appeal of the patriarch for the maintenance of peace.

I. IT IS A MOST DESIRABLE THING TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH OTHERS. We are commanded to do so: "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." We may not sacrifice any good principle for the sake of ease, but we are to strive to maintain peace. In matters of faith a man may have to take up at times such a position that others will speak ill of him, but in regard to the neighbourly life he must by all means cultivate amity and concord. Little is ever gained by standing on "our rights." Scandal is always the fruit of quarrelling. The worldly-minded are sure to plume themselves on their superior goodness when the spiritually-minded contend. In many homes there is jangling, sneering, and strife; scathing remarks like hot cinders from Vesuvius fall carelessly around. Tyrannous tempers become like tornados, and moodiness kills like the choke-damp of an ill-ventilated mine. Among nations there should be maintenance of peace. The common sense of most should "hold the fretful realm in awe." In the Church strife should cease. It will when each sect seeks to make men Christlike and not uniform bigots.

II. THERE ARE ALWAYS MEANS OF MAINTAINING PEACE WHEN IT IS DESIRED. Abraham acted most unselfishly with this view; he yielded his claim to a choice. Lot owed much to Abraham, yet he seized an advantage. Lot looks towards Sodom; the strip of green beside the lake and reaching to Jordan reminds him of the land of Nile. The spirit of Egypt, whence he had lately come, is in him; he chooses Sodom, but with its green pastures he has to take its awful corruption. Abraham turns away in the direction alone left to him. He has his tent, his altar, the promises, and his God; he will live in peace. His Father will not forsake him; indeed God very speedily renews his promises to Abraham, and thus the unselfishness of a peaceful man met with an appropriate reward.—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 10.—**And Lot lifted up his eyes.** *Circumspexit;* with a look of eager, lustful greed (cf. ch. iii. 6). The same expression is afterwards used of Abram (ver. 14), where perhaps also the element of satisfaction, though in a good sense, is designed to be included. **And beheld all the plain.** Literally, *all the circle*, or surrounding region (כִּכָּר, from כָּרַר, to move in a circle; cf. *arrondissement*, Fr.; *kreis* or *bezirk*, Ger.); περίχωρος (LXX., Matt. iii. 5); now called El Ghôr, the low country (Gesenius). **Of Jordan.** Compounded of Jor-Dan, the names of the two river sources (Josephus, Jerome); but, accordng to modern etymologists, derived from יָרַד, to go down, and signifying the Descender, like the German Rhine, from *rinnen*, to run. The largest river of Palestine, rising at the foot of Antilibanus, and passing, in its course of 200 miles, over twenty-seven rapids, it pours its waters first into the lake of Merom, and then into the sea of Galilee, 653 feet, and finally into the Lacus Asphaltites, 1316 feet below the level of the Mediterranean (cf. Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' ch. vii. p. 282). It is now called Esh-Sheri'ah, *i. e.* the ford, as having been of old crossed by the Israelites (Gesenius). **That it was well-watered everywhere.** Not by canals and trenches, as old interpreters imagined, but by copious streams along its course, descending chiefly from the mountains of Moab. **Before the Lord destroyed**—the same word is used for the destruction of all flesh in what is styled the Elohistic account of the Deluge (ch. vi. 13, 17; ix. 11, 15; cf. 'Quarry on Genesis,' p. 423)—**Sodom and Gomorrha** (*vide* ch. xiv. 2). Even **as the garden of the Lord.** Paradise in Eden, with its four streams (ch. ii. 10; Calvin, Lange, Keil); though by some this is deemed unsatisfactory (Quarry), and the phrase taken as = *hortus amœnissimus* (Rosenmüller), and in particular Mesopotamia, which was a land of rare fecundity (Grotius, Junius). **Like the land of Egypt**—which was irrigated by the Nile and

by canals from it as well as by machines (Deut. xi. 10, 11)—**as thou comest unto Zoar**—at the south-east corner of the Dead Sea (*vide* ch. xiv. 3).

Ver. 11.—**Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan.** Allured by its beauty and fertility, and heedless of other or higher considerations. **And Lot journeyed east,** מִקֶּדֶם = *versus orientem* (cf. ch. xi. 2). **And they separated themselves the one from the other.** Literally, *a man from his brother.*

Ver. 12.—**Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan.** Strictly so called; in its larger sense Canaan included the circle of the Jordan. **And Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain.** Being desirous of a permanent settlement within the gates, or at least in the immediate neighbourhood, of the wealthy cities of the land; in contrast to his uncle, who remained a wanderer throughout its borders, sojourning as in a strange country (Heb. xi. 9). **And** (with this purpose in contemplation, he) **pitched** his **tent toward** (*i. e.* in the direction of, and as far as to) **Sodom.**

Ver. 13.—**But** (literally, *and*) **the men of Sodom** were **wicked and sinners** — their wickedness is more specifically detailed in ch. xix., *q. v.*)—**before the Lord**—literally, *to Jehovah* = before the face of Jehovah; ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ (LXX.), *vide* ch. x. 9; an aggravation of the wickedness of the Sodomites—**exceedingly.** Their vileness was restrained neither in quantity nor quality. As it passed all height in arrogance, so it burst all bounds in prevalence.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 10.—*The choice of Lot.* I. THE EXCELLENCE OF LOT'S CHOICE. 1. *Beautiful.* Viewed from the Bethel plateau, at the moment perhaps gilded with the shimmering radiance of the morning sun, the Jordan circle was a scene of enchanting loveliness; and in yielding to the fascinations of the gorgeous panorama that spread itself out on the distant horizon it cannot be affirmed that Lot committed sin. The Almighty Maker of the universe loves beauty, as his works attest (Eccles. iii. 11), and hath implanted the like instinct in the soul of man. Hence, so far from being a signal of depravity, the capacity of admiring and appreciating mere physical and external grace and symmetry betokens a nature not yet completely disempowered by sin; and so far from its being wrong to surround oneself with objects that are pleasing to the eye, it is rather incumbent so to do, provided always it can be accomplished without sin. 2. *Productive.* As there is no sin in having elegant mansions, fair gardens, and fine pictures to look upon, so neither is there evil in desiring fertile fields instead of barren rocks to cultivate. Sentenced to eat bread in the sweat of his brow, the Christian is not thereby required to prefer a tract of moorland to a farm of rich alluvial soil. Monkish asceticism may enjoin such self-mortification on its devotees; Christianity invites men to enjoy the good things which have been freely given to them by God. The well-watered fields of the Jordan circle were as open to the choice of Lot as were the bleak Judæan hills. 3. *Suggestive.* Already it had recalled to his memory the luxuriant plains of Egypt which he had lately visited, and to his imagination the resplendent Eden of man's primeval days; and doubtless it was such a region as could scarcely fail to inspire a devout mind with lofty thoughts, pure emotions, and holy aspirations, so leading the entranced worshipper from nature up to nature's God. Since the human soul cannot choose but be insensibly affected for good or evil by its material as well as moral environment, it is well, when Divine providence gives us the election, that we select for our abodes scenes and places that shall elevate and refine rather than deteriorate and depress.

II. THE DRAWBACKS OF LOT'S CHOICE. 1. *Bad neighbours.* The inhabitants of the Jordanic Pentapolis were sinners of an aggravated type. And while it may not be possible to avoid all contact with wicked men (1 Cor. v. 10), it becomes God's people to keep as far aloof as possible from the ungodly, and especially from transgressors like the Sodomites. Mingling with and marrying into the families of the ungodly ruined the antediluvian world. The chief injury done to the Church of Christ arises from a throwing down of the wall of separation between it and the world. Separation from and nonconformity to the world, and much more the wicked portion of it, is the duty of believers (Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. vi. 17). 2. *Moral contamination.* Though Lot was a good man, his piety would not prevent the gradual deterioration of his nature through the evil influence of his neighbours. There is a contagion, for good or evil, in example which is well nigh irresistible. "He that

walketh with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." 3. *Bitter sorrow.* Precisely in proportion to the eminence of his religious character would this be inevitable. The immoralities and infidelities of the Sodomites would plunge him into grief, if they did not cause "rivers of water" to run down his eyes. And so it eventually came to pass (2 Pet. ii. 8).

III. THE SINFULNESS OF LOT'S CHOICE. 1. *Avaricious in its origin.* Thus it was a sin against God. Had no drawbacks attended it, had it in all other respects been commendable and prudent, the lust of cupidity out of which it sprang would have condemned it. Few things are more frequently and emphatically reprehended in the word of God than the inordinate desire of possession (Luke xii. 15; Ephes. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; Heb. xiii. 5). 2. *Selfish in its character.* Thus, besides being a sin against God, it was an offence against his uncle. Had Abram and Lot stood upon a platform of equality, religious principle should have dictated to Lot the propriety of either returning the right of choice to Abram, or himself selecting what he believed to be the inferior quarter (Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 3); but Abram was Lot's superior in age, and therefore entitled to take precedence of one who was younger; Lot's uncle, and, in virtue of that relationship, deserving of his nephew's honour; Lot's guardian and benefactor, and, as a consequence, worthy of acknowledgment and gratitude at the hands of one whom he had enriched; and, what was more important for the settlement of the question, the actual heir and owner of the land, to whom accordingly belonged the prerogative of claiming not its fattest portion only, but its entire domain. All these considerations rendered Lot's choice offensive in the extreme. 3. *Dangerous in its issues.* As such it was a sin against himself as well as against God. Even though evil should not come of it, it was not open to Lot, as a good man, to establish himself where injury to his spiritual interests was possible. That he did not reckon the moral bearings of his choice was an aggravation rather than an extenuation of his sin. He had time to calculate the chances of material prosperity; he should also have counted up the moral hazards before he elected to drive his flocks and herds to Sodom.

Lessons:—1. All is not gold that glitters; hence the supreme unwisdom of judging either things or persons according to appearance. 2. In every man's lot there is a crook; hence the propriety of moderating our desires concerning everything. 3. It is possible to pay too dear a price for material prosperity. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" 4. It is a poor outcome of piety which prefers self-interest to the claims either of affection or religion; the man who loves himself better than his neighbour is still devoid of the spirit of Christ. 5. In the long run the spirit of selfishness is certain to overreach itself and accomplish its own ruin.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 10—13.—*The choice of Lot.* I. WHAT LOT TOOK INTO ACCOUNT. 1. His own worldly circumstances; and, 2. The suitability of the Jordan circle to advance them.

II. WHAT LOT DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT. 1. The reverence due to his uncle. 2. The greater right which Abram had to the soil of Canaan. 3. The danger, in parting with Abram, of separating himself from Abram's God. 4. The risk of damage to his spiritual interests in settling in the Jordan circle.

Learn—1. That while it may be right, in life's actions, to take our worldly interests into account, it is wrong and dangerous to take nothing else. 2. That no amount of purely worldly advantage can either justify or recompense the disregard of the higher interests of the soul. 3. That though good men may oftentimes find reasons for neglecting the soul's interests, they cannot do so with impunity.—W.

Vers. 10, 13.—*Sodom and the Sodomites, or the place and the people.* 1. The physical beauty of the Jordan valley. 2. The moral corruption of its inhabitants.

Lessons:—1. The weakness of nature as a moral educator. 2. The true design of nature as a moral educator.—W.

Ver. 11.—*The parting of the friends.* I. The SADNESS of this parting. It was a

parting—1. Of kinsmen (men, brethren). 2. Of kinsmen in a foreign land. 3. Of kinsmen by their own hand.

II. The CAUSE of this parting. 1. The difficulty of finding sustenance together. 2. The danger of collision if they kept together.

III. The MANNER of this parting. 1. After prayer. 2. In peace. 3. With magnanimity on the part of Abram. 4. With meanness on that of Lot.

Lessons:—1. It is sad when brethren cannot dwell together in unity. 2. It is better that brethren should separate than quarrel.—W.

Ver. 11.—*Lot's unwise choice.* "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." To Lot no doubt this seemed but a matter of prudence, a choice of pastures, yet it stamped his after life. He was a godly man. We miss the point if we think of him as careless. The lesson is for God's people. At first guided by his uncle, but time came when he must act alone. Pastures of Bethel not sufficient. Strife between the herdsmen. God uses little things to work his will. In every life times when choice must be made. Perhaps definite and distinct, *e.g.* leaving home, or choice of a profession; perhaps less marked, as in the choice of friends and associates, or the habits imperceptibly formed. We must be thus tried; needful for our training (James i. 12). A sevenfold blessing "to him that overcometh" (Rev. ii., iii.).

I. EVIL OF LOT'S CHOICE. He chose the best pasture. Why should he not? The fault lay in the motive, the want of spiritual thought in a secular matter. He broke no positive law, but looked only to worldly good. The evil of Sodom was disregarded. No prayer for guidance; no thought how he could best serve God (cf. James i. 14).

II. EFFECT OF LOT'S CHOICE. 1. No real happiness. His soul vexed (2 Pet. ii. 8). His life; fretting at evil which he had not resolution to escape from. 2. Real injury. His character enervated. From dwelling in plain came into the city; formed connections there. Irresolute and lingering when warned to flee. His prayer for himself only. Was saved "as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). We are tried daily, in the valley or on the mountain. We cannot avoid trials; not good for us if we could. The one way of safety: "Seek first the kingdom of God." There is an evil terribly widespread—of seeking first the world; thinking not to neglect God, but putting Christianity into corners of the life. What saith the world? Haste to be rich, or great; take thine ease; assert thyself; be high-spirited. And the customs of society and much of education repeat the lesson. But what saith Christ? Look unto me. Not at stated times, but always. The cause of much dispeace, of many spiritual sorrows (1 Tim. vi. 10), is want of thoroughness in taking Christ as our guide. Lot was preserved. Will any say, "I ask no more"? "Remember Lot's wife." How narrow the line between his hesitation and her looking back! The grain *may* sprout through thorns (Matt. xiii. 22), but the thorns are ever growing.—M.

Ver. 12.—*Going to Sodom.* I. HOW IT MAY HAVE LOOKED TO LOT. 1. As a matter of business it was good. 2. In its moral aspects the step was dangerous. But—3. Doubtless at first Lot did not intend entering the city. And perhaps—4. Lot may have justified his doubtful conduct by hoping that he would have opportunities of doing good to the Sodomites.

II. HOW IT MUST HAVE LOOKED TO THE SODOMITES. It must have—1. Surprised them to see a good man like Lot coming to a neighbourhood so bad. 2. Led them to think adversely of a religion that preferred worldly advantage to spiritual interest. 3. Rendered them impervious to any influence for good from Lot's example.

Lessons:—1. It is perilous to go towards Sodom if one wants to keep out of Sodom. 2. It is useless preaching to Sodomites while gathering wealth in Sodom. —W.

Going towards Sodom. 1. An inviting journey. 2. A gradual journey. 3. A sinful journey. 4. A dangerous journey.—W.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 14, 15.—**And the Lord said**—speaking probably with an articulate voice; the third occasion on which the patriarch was directly addressed by God. The narrative, however, does not affirm that there was any actual theophany—**unto Abram**—who could readily recognise the voice which had twice already spoken to him. **After that Lot was separated from him.** Thus God approved that separation (Poole), and administered consolation to the troubled heart of the patriarch (Calvin), though Divine revelations are rather wont to be made to minds already quiet and sedate (Lyra). **Lift up now thine eyes.** Perhaps a studied reference to the act of Lot, which Moses describes in similar language (ver. 10), and possibly designed to suggest the greater satisfaction which would be imparted to the soul of Abram by the survey about to be made. **And look from the place where thou art.** Between Bethel and Ai, on one of the mountain peaks (cf. ch. xii. 8; xiii. 3), from which a commanding view of almost the entire country could be obtained. **Northward**—towards "the hills which divide Judæa from the rich plains of Samaria"—**and southward**—as far as to the Hebron range—**and eastward**—in the direction of the dark mountain wall of Moab, down through the rich ravine which leads from the central hills of Palestine to the valley of the Jordan, and across that very "circle" into which Lot has already departed with his flocks—**and westward**—literally, *towards the sea*. Cf. on the view from the stony but fertile plateau between Bethel and Ai, Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' ch. iv. p. 218. **For all the land which thou seest**—*i. e.* the entire country, a part being put for the whole—**to thee will I give it.** To avoid an apparent conflict between this Divine declaration and the words of Stephen (Acts vii. 5), it is proposed by some to read the next clause as epexegetic of the present (Ainsworth, Bush); but the land was really given to Abram as a nomade chief, in the sense that he peacefully lived for many years, grew old, and died within its borders (Clericus, Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary'), while it was assigned to his descendants only because it had been first donated to him. **And to thy seed.** Not his bodily posterity alone, to whom the terrestrial Canaan was given, but also and chiefly his spiritual family, to whom was made over that better country, even an heavenly, of which the land of promise was a type. **For ever.** *'Adh 'ôlam* (*vide* on ch. ix. 16) = in perpetuity; *i.e.* (1) to the close of that 'olam or period which was already measured out in the secret counsels of Jehovah for the duration of the seed of Abraham as a people, "quum terra in seculum promittitur, non simpliciter notatur perpetuitas, sed quæ finem accepit in Christo" (Calvin); and (2) unto eternity, in so far as it was a promise of a spiritual inheritance to Abraham's believing children. Thus as the promise did not preclude the expulsion of unbelieving Israel from the land, so neither does it guarantee to existing Jews a return to the earthly Paradise (Keil).

Ver. 16.—**And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth.** "As the land shall be great for thy people, thy posterity, so thy people shall be great or innumerable for the land" (Lange). Afterwards the seed of Abram is likened to the stars of heaven for multitude (ch. xv. 5). **So that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.**

Ver. 17.—**Arise.** According to a common mode of Oriental speech, pleonastically affixed to verbs of going, going forward, and of setting about anything with impulse (Gesenius, p. 727; cf. ch. xxii. 3; Job i. 20). **Walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it.** To be understood not as a literal direction, but as an intimation that he might leisurely survey his inheritance with the calm assurance that it was his. **For I will give it unto thee.**

Ver. 18.—**Then**—literally, *and*, acting immediately as the heavenly voice directed—**Abram removed**—or rather pitched (cf. ver. 12)—his **tent, and dwelt**—settled down, made the central point of his subsequent abode in Canaan (Wordsworth)—**in the plain**—בְּאֵלֹנֵי = oaks (Gesenius) or terebinths (Celsius); *vide* ch. xii. 6—**of Mamre**—an Amorite chieftain who afterwards became the friend and ally of Abram (ch. xiv. 13, 24), and to whom probably the grove belonged—**which is in Hebron**—twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem on the way to Beersheba, a town of great antiquity, having been built seven years before Zoan, in Egypt (Numb. xiii. 22). As it is elsewhere styled *Kirjath-arba*, or the city of Arba (ch. xxiii. 2; xxxv. 27), and appears to have been so called until the conquest (Josh. xiv. 15), the occurrence of the name *Hebron* is regarded as a trace of post-Mosaic authorship (Clericus, *et alii*); but it is more probable that *Hebron* was the original name of the city, and that it received the appellation *Kirjath-arba* on the arrival in the country of Arba the Anakite, perhaps during the sojourn of Jacob's descendants in Egypt (Rosenmüller, Baumgarten, Hengstenberg, Keil, Kurtz). The place is called by modern Arabs El Khalil, the friend of God. **And built there an altar unto the Lord.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 14—18.—*Magnanimity rewarded, or Divine compensations.* I. A REVELATION GIVEN. Immediately on Lot's departure Jehovah approaches, the appearance of the heavenly Friend compensating for the loss of the earthly kinsman, as often happens in the Divine dealings with men and saints. The revelation now afforded to the patriarch was—1. *Personal.* Essentially a self-revealing God, only through the medium of a person can Jehovah give a full and clear unveilment of himself. Of this description was the theophany accorded to the solitary flock-master on the Bethel plateau; and in the man Christ Jesus have the saints a like disclosure of the person and character of the unapproachable Supreme. 2. *Gracious.* The dignity of him who thus appeared to the patriarch, the all-sufficient and self-existent Deity, and the character of him to whom such revelation was vouchsafed, the father of the faithful, but still a mere creature, and, apart from Divine grace, exposed to just condemnation, attest its stupendous condescension. Yet "such honour have all the saints" to whom, notwithstanding their personal insignificance and deep unworthiness, the supreme Deity has approached and unveiled himself in Christ. 3. *Opportune.* At the time when it was made the patriarch's heart, we can imagine, was the seat of mingled emotions. Saddened by the loss of a kinsman who had been long his companion, and perhaps pained by the recollection of that kinsman's avarice, dejected as he realised his solitude among hostile neighbours and in a foreign land, though, doubtless, also sustained by a consciousness of having acted well in parting with his nephew, the patriarch was much in need of Divine consolation and succour. And so are Christ's visits to his people ever seasonable (Luke xxiv. 15; John vi. 20) and suitable to their wants. 4. *Comforting.* This was proved by his subsequent behaviour. Plucking up the stakes of his tent, he resumed his travels, and at his next encampment built an altar for the worship of the Lord. It is a good sign that gracious visits to needy souls are having their desired effect when those souls are able to attend to the ordinary but necessary duties of life, and to preserve their relish for the public and private rites of religion.

II. A LAND GRANTED. For the loss of the Jordan circle the patriarch receives an express donation of the entire territory of Canaan. So Christ promises to reward his self-sacrificing followers in kind as well as quantity, and in the life that now is as well as in that which is to come (Matt. xix. 29). The grant made to Abram was—1. *Magnificent.* The grant of a land; of the land of Palestine in the first instance, and in the second of the better country, even an heavenly, of which the earthly Canaan was a type (Heb. xi. 8—10). The like grant is made to believers in the gospel (Matt. v. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 12). 2. *Certain.* The complete isolation of the patriarch, the occupation of the land, and especially the barrenness of Sarai, were all calculated to make the Divine donation of the country before him but a doubtful gift after all. And so sometimes to Christians may the heavenly inheritance appear highly problematical. But the ground of certainty for them is precisely what it was to Abram, the word of the living God; and as Abram staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, so neither should they. 3. *Perpetual.* To thee, and to thy seed for ever, were the terms in which the earthly Canaan was conveyed to the patriarch. That is, so long as the seed of Abram according to the flesh existed as a separate nation they should occupy the land of Canaan; while for his spiritual posterity the heavenly Canaan should continue an inalienable possession. So earth to the believer is a perpetual inheritance in the sense that "the world is his," while heaven is an eternal country from which he shall go no more out.

III. A SEED PROMISED. The magnanimity of the patriarch had deprived him of a brother's son; the grace of God rewarded him by promising a child of his own. No man ever comes off a loser who makes sacrifices for God. The seed promised was to be—1. *Numerous.* A multitude instead of one; exemplified in the untold millions of Abram's natural descendants. So God delights to reward his people, returning to them a hundredfold for what they give to him (Matt. xix. 20; Ephes. iii. 20). 2. *Spiritual.* An offspring united to him by bonds of grace in lieu of a kinsman connected with him by ties of blood; a prediction realised in the myriads of his believing

children. Another principle which regulates the Divine compensations bestowed on saints is to take the less and give the greater, to remove the material and impart the spiritual (John xvi. 7; xix. 26). 3. *Eminent.* If Lot was renowned for wealth and worldly prudence, the unborn seed of Abram should be distinguished in the annals of both Church and world for riches of a more enduring character and wisdom of a nobler kind; a prophecy fulfilled in Israel after the flesh, which as a nation has always been more distinguished for intelligence and capacity than for numbers; in Israel after the spirit, or the Church of God, whose characteristics have ever been rare spiritual illumination and high moral potency; and in Israel's Saviour, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Learn—1. That God is the ever-present though unseen Spectator of noble deeds. 2. That every act of self-sacrifice performed for his sake elicits his approbation. 3. That while he who keeps his life shall lose it, he who, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, loses it shall ultimately find it.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass.** After the separation of Abram and Lot, the latter of whom now appears as a citizen of Sodom, and not merely a settler in the Jordan circle; perhaps about the eighty-fourth year of Abram's life (Hughes). The present chapter, "the oldest extant record respecting Abraham" (Ewald), but introduced into the Mosaic narrative by the Jehovistic editor (Knobel, Tuch, Bleek, Davidson), possesses traces of authenticity, of which not the least is the chronological definition with which it commences (Hävernick). **In the days of Amraphel.** Sanscrit, *Amrapâla*, keeper of the gods (Gesenius); *Arphaxad* (Fürst); powerful people (Young, 'Analytical Concordance'); root unknown (Murphy, Kalisch). **King of Shinar.** *Babel* (Onkelos); *Bagdad* (Arabic version of Erpenius); *Pontus* (Jonathan); the successor of Nimrod (*vide* ch. x. 10). **Arioch.** Sanscrit, *Arjaka*, venerated (Bohlen, Gesenius, Fürst); probably from the root אֲרִי, a lion, hence leonine (Gesenius, Murphy). The name, which reappears in Dan. ii. 14, has been compared, though doubtfully, with the *Urukh* of the inscriptions (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. iii. p. 9). **King of Ellasar.** *Pontus* (Symmachus, Vulgate); the region between Babylon and Elymais (Gesenius); identified with Larsa or Laranka, the Λάρισσα or Λαράχων of the Greeks, now *Senkereh*, a town of Lower Babylonia, between *Mugheir* (Ur) and *Warka* (Erech), on the left bank of the Euphrates (Rawlinson). **Chedorlaomer.** A "handful of sheaves," if the word be Phœnicio-Shemitic, though probably its true etymology should be sought in ancient Persian (Gesenius, Fürst). The name has been detected by archæologists in *Kudur-mapula*, the Ravager of the West, whom monumental evidence declares to have reigned over Babylon in the twentieth century B.C.; and "*Kudurnanhundi* the Elamite, the worship of the great gods who did not fear," and the conqueror of Chaldæa, B.C. 2280; but in both instances the identifications are problematical. The name Chedorlaomer in Babylonian would be *Kudur-lagamer;* but as yet this name has not been found on the inscriptions (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. iii. pp. 7, 19). **King of Elam.** East of Babylonia, on the north of the Persian Gulf (cf. ch. x. 22). **And Tidal.** "Fear, veneration" (Gesenius); terror (Murphy); "splendour, renown" (Fürst); though the name may not be Shemitic. **King of nations.** The Scythians (Symmachus); the Galilean heathen (Clericus, Rosenmüller, Delitzsch), which are inappropriate in this connection; nomadic races (Rawlinson); probably some smaller tribes so gradually subjugated by Tidal as to render it "impossible to describe him briefly with any degree of accuracy" (Kalisch).

Ver. 2.—**That these made war.** The LXX. connect the present with the preceding verse by reading "that Arioch," &c. Ewald interpolates "of Abram" before "that Amraphel." **With Bera.** "Gift"=בֶּרַע (Gesenius). **King of Sodom.** "Burning, conflagration," as being built on bituminous soil, and therefore subject to volcanic eruptions; from סָדַם, conjectured to mean to burn (Gesenius). "Lime place," or "enclosed place;" from סָדָה, to surround (Fürst). A mountain with fossil salt at the present day is called Hâgv Usdûm; and Galen also knew of a Sodom mountain. **And with Birsha** = בִּרְשַׁע "son of wickedness" (Gesenius); "long and thick" (Murphy); "strong, thick" (Fürst). **King of Gomorrah.** Γομόῤῥα (LXX.); perhaps "culture, habitation" (Gesenius);

"rent, fissure" (Fürst). **Shinab.** "Father's tooth" (Gesenius); "splendour of Ab" (Fürst); "coolness" (Murphy). **King of Admah.** Fruit region, farm city (Fürst). **And Shemeber.** "Soaring aloft" (Gesenius). **King of Zeboiim.** Place of hyenas (Gesenius); gazelles (Murphy); a wild place (Fürst). **And the king of Bela.** "Devoured," or "devouring" (Gesenius). **Which is Zoar.** "The small," a name afterwards given to the city (ch. xix. 22), and here introduced as being better known than the more ancient one.

Ver. 3.—**All these**—the last-named princes —**were joined together**—*i. e.* as confederates (sc. and came with their forces)—**in** (literally, *to*) **the vale of Siddim.** The salt valley (LXX.); a wooded vale (Vulgate); a plain filled with rocky hollows (Gesenius), with which ver. 10 agrees; the valley of plains or fields (Onkelos, Raschi, Keil, Murphy). **Which is the salt sea.** *I. e.* where the salt sea afterwards arose, on the destruction of the cities of the plain—ch. xix. 24, 25 (Keil, Hävernick; cf. Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' iv. 8, 4); but the text scarcely implies that the cities were submerged—only the valley (cf. Quarry, p. 207). The extreme depression of the Dead Sea, being 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean ("the most depressed sheet of water in the world:" Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' ch. vii.), conjoined with its excessive saltness (containing 26¼ per cent of saline particles), renders it one of the most remarkable of inland lakes. Its shores are clothed with gloom and desolation. Within a mile from its northern embouchure the verdure of the rich Jordan valley dies away. Strewn along its desolate margin lie broken canes and willow branches, with trunks of palms, poplars, and other trees, half embedded in slimy mud, and all covered with incrustations of salt. At its south-western corner stands the mountain of rock salt, with its columnar fragments, which Josephus says in his day was regarded as the pillar of Lot's wife.

Ver. 4.—**Twelve years**—dating from the commencement of his reign (Murphy)—**they served**—and paid tribute (cf. 2 Kings xviii. 7)—**Chedorlaomer.** If the king of Elam was a Shemite prince, this was in accordance with the Noachic prophecy (ch. ix. 26); but according to the monuments the Elamite dynasty was Turanian. **And in the thirteenth year**—during the whole of the thirteenth year (*vide* Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 300, *a.*; cf. ver. 5)—**they rebelled,** or had rebelled.

Ver. 5.—**And in** (or during) **the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that** were **with him, and smote** (because of actual or probable rebellion) **the Rephaims.** Γίγαντας (LXX.), a tribe of gigantic stature (from an Arabic root, to be high), the iron bed of whose last king, Og, measured nine yards in length and four in breadth (Deut. iii. 11); forming a portion of the aboriginal inhabitants of Palestine prior to the invasion of the Canaanites, though existing as a remnant as late as the conquest (ch. ii. 20; iii. 11, 13). **In Ashteroth Karnaim.** Literally, *Ashteroth of the Two Horns;* so called either from its situation between two horn-shaped hills (Jewish interpreters), or because of the horned cattle with which it abounded (Hillery), or in honour of the goddess Ashtaroth, Astarte, or Venus, whose image was such as to suggest the idea of a horned figure (À Lapide, Gesenius, Kalisch); identified by some with the capital of Og (Keil), but by others distinguished from it (Wetstein); of uncertain site, though claimed to survive in the ruins of *Tell Ashtereh,* near the ancient Edrei (Ritter); in those of *'Afineh,* eight miles from Buzrah (Porter); in the modern village *Mesarib* (Burckhardt); or in *El Kurnem* or *Ophein* in Ledsha (Robinson). **And the Zuzims.** Probably the Zamzummims between the Arnon and the Jabbok (Deut. ii. 20). **In Ham.** "Possibly the ancient name of Rabba of the Ammonites (Deut. iii. 11), the remains being still preserved in the ruins of Ammân" (Keil). **And the Emims.** *Fearful and terrible men,* the primitive inhabitants of Moab (Deut. ii. 10, 11); called also Rephaims, as being of colossal stature. **In Shaveh Kiriathaim.** Literally, *the plain of Kiriathaim,* or *the plain of the two cities,* situated in the district afterwards assigned to Reuben (Numb. xxxii. 37); identified with *Coraiatha,* the modern *Koerriath* or *Kereyat,* ten miles west of Medebah (Eusebius, Jerome, Kalisch), which, however, rather corresponds with *Kerioth,* in Jer. xlviii. 24 (Keil).

Ver. 6.—**And the Horites.** Literally, *dwellers in caves;* from *chor,* a cave. **In their mount Seir.** Literally, wooded (Gesenius); hairy (Fürst); rugged (Lange); probably with reference to the thick brushwood and forests that grew upon its sides. The cave men of Seir were the earlier inhabitants of the region lying between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Elam, afterwards taken possession of by the Edomites (Deut. ii. 12; Jer. xlix. 16; Obad. 3, 4). **Unto El-paran.** *I. e.* the oak or terebinth of Paran. **Which is by the wilderness.** Between the land of Edom and the fertile country of Egypt, and to the southward of Palestine, identified as the plateau of the *Tîh,* across which the Israelitish march lay from Sinai (Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 92).

Ver. 7.—**And they returned**—from the oak of Paran, the southernmost point reached by the invaders—**and came to En-**

mishpat—the Well of Judgment, regarded as a prolepsis by those who derive the name from the judgment pronounced on Moses and Aaron (À Lapide); but more probably the ancient designation of the town, which was so styled because the townsmen and villagers settled their disputes at the well in its neighbourhood (Kalisch)—**which is Kadesh**, of which (Numb. xx. 14) the exact site cannot now be ascertained, though the spring *Ain Kades*, on the heights of *Jebel Halal*, twelve miles east-south-east of *Moyle*, the halting-place of caravans (Rowland, Keil, Kalisch), and *Petra* (Josephus, Stanley), have been suggested as marking the locality. **And smote all the country of the Amalekites.** *I. e.* afterwards possessed by them, to the west of Edom. Amalek was a grandson of Esau (*vide* ch. xxxvi. 12). **And also the Amorites.** The mountaineers, as distinguished from the Canaanites or low-landers (cf. ch. x. 16). **That dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.** "The pruning of the palm;" afterwards Engedi, "the fountain of the wild goat," situated midway up the western shore of the Dead Sea, and now called *Ain-jidy* (cf. Josh. xv. 62; 1 Sam. xxiv. 1, 2; 2 Chron. xx. 2; Ezek. xlvii. 10).

Vers. 8, 9.—**And there went out** (to resist the onslaught of the victorious Asiatics) **the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar)**; (*i. e.* the five revolted monarchs of the Pentapolis) **and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim** (*vide* ver. 3); **with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.**

Ver. 10.—**And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits.** Literally, *was pits, pits* (cf. 2 Kings iii. 16; Ezek. xlii. 12 for examples of repeated nouns) *of slime*, bitumen or asphalte, and therefore unfavourable for flight. "Some of the wells near the Dead Sea are 116 feet deep, with a stratum of bitumen fifteen feet in depth, and as black as jet" (Inglis). **And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there.** Stumbled into the pits and perished (Keil, Lange, Murphy), though if the king of Sodom escaped (ver. 17), the language may only mean that they were overthrown there (Knobel, Rosenmüller, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And they that remained fled to the mountain**, of Moab, with its numerous defiles.

Ver. 11.—**And they** (the conquering kings) **took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way**, ascending up the valley of the Jordan *en route* for Damascus.

Ver. 12.—**And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom.** The last view of Lot saw him driving off his flocks and herds from Bethel. It betokens a considerable declension in spiritual life to behold him a citizen of Sodom. **And his goods** (all the property he had acquired through his selfish choice of the Jordan circle), **and departed.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 12.—*The capture of Lot, or Nemesis pursuing sin.* I. AN EXAMPLE OF THE BITTER FRUITS OF WAR. 1. *War is sometimes justifiable in its origin and objects.* When undertaken to achieve or preserve national independence, to vindicate the liberties and secure the rights of men, or to repel the aggressions of ambitious despots, even war with all its bloody horrors may become an imperious and fierce necessity. It is difficult to determine whether on either side the campaign in the vale of Siddim was entitled to be so characterised. The kings of the Pentapolis were fighting for emancipation from a foreign yoke, and so far perhaps were entitled to be regarded as having right upon their side; yet they had themselves been invaders of a land which had originally been assigned to the tribes of Shem. But however the question of right may be settled as between these ancient warriors, it is certain their successors on the battle-fields of earth have much more frequently had the wrong upon their sides than the right. 2. *Victory does not always favour those who seem to have the best cause.* The maxim of the great Napoleon, that God is always on the side of the strongest battalions, is as wide astray from the exact truth on this important subject as is the prevailing sentiment that God always defends the right. The doctrine of Scripture is that the Lord of Hosts is independent of both regiments and rifles, can save by many or by few, and giveth the victory to whomsoever he will; and that not always does he choose to render those arms triumphant which are striking for the holiest cause, but sometimes, for reasons of his own (it may be to chastise a nation for its sins, or to move them to faith and prayer, or to teach them some important lesson), permits the wrong to trample down the right. The history

of Israel and the records of modern warfare supply numerous examples. 3. *Disastrous and terrible are the usual concomitants of war.* Not that God does not frequently overrule the hostilities of contending nations, and evolve from the murderous designs of monarchs results the most beneficial, making war the pioneer of civilisation, and even of religion; but the immediate effects of international strife are ever ruinous and appalling—fruitful fields devastated, fair cities sacked, valuable property destroyed, lives of men wasted, a nation's blood and treasure poured out like water, lamentation, mourning, and woe commissioned to many homes, and a burden of care and sorrow laid on all. All this was exemplified in the present instance. 4. *When war arises the innocent largely suffer with the guilty.* Had the campaign against the kings of the Pentapolis not been prepared, it is probable that the Rephaims, Zuzims, Emims, Horites, Amalekites, and Amorites would not have suffered at the hands of Chedorlaomer, and it is certain that Lot would not have been made a prisoner by the victorious monarch. Now, so far as the primal reason of this invasion was concerned, all these were innocent of any offence against the Asiatic king, and yet they were amongst the victims of his wrath against the rebels of the Jordan circle.

II. AN INSTANCE OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION. 1. *Deserved.* Although Lot was a righteous man, he had egregiously sinned, (1) in choosing the Jordan circle as his portion, (2) in making his abode in Sodom, (3) in continuing amongst the inhabitants when he ascertained their ungodly character. Consequently God avenged himself upon his erring servant by allowing him to lose his property, and to come near the losing of his life as well in the sacking of the city. So "the face of the Lord is set against them that do evil." 2. *Unexpected* probably as to its cause, Lot thinking he had committed nothing worthy of chastisement, for sin has a strange power of obscuring the moral vision and deadening the voice of conscience; almost certainly as to its time, God's judgments for the most part taking men unawares (cf. Ps. lxxiii. 18, 19), and evil-doers being commonly snared in an evil time, like the fishes of the sea (Eccles. ix. 12), walking like blind men because they have sinned against the Lord (Zeph. i. 17); and more than likely as to its form, those who anticipate the outpouring of Divine indignation being seldom able to discern beforehand the special character it will assume. 3. *Appropriate.* Lot had chosen the Jordan circle as the most advantageous locality for thriving in his flocks and herds, and Chedorlaomer's armies swept his folds and stalls entirely clean. He had elected to live among the filthy Sodomites, and so he is compelled to fare as they. God's recompenses to evil-doers (whether saints or sinners) are never unsuitable, though man's often are. 4. *Merciful.* He might have lost his life in the general massacre of the city's inhabitants, but he only lost his property, or rather it was not yet lost, although, doubtless, Lot imagined that it was; only pillaged and carried off along with himself, his wife, and daughters. So God ever mingles mercy with judgment when dealing with his people. 5. *Premonitory.* Though all retribution is not designed to admonish and reprove, this was. The vengeance taken on the wicked at the day of judgment will be purely punitive; that which falls upon transgressors while on earth is aimed at their amendment. Unhappily, however, as in the case of Lot, it is sometimes inefficacious. Instead of taking warning at what might have proved his ruin, Lot was no sooner rescued than he returned to Sodom. So great providential judgments and great providential mercies are often equally despised.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xiv.—*The kingdom of God in its relation to the contending powers of this world.* I. GOD'S JUDGMENTS ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO FALL. War is made by confederate kings or princes against the people of the wicked cities of the plain, who by their propinquity would naturally be leagued together, but by their common rebellion against Chedorlaomer were involved in a common danger. Notice the indication of the future judgment given in the course of the narrative—"the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits." God's vengeance underlies the wicked, ready to burst forth on them in due time.

II. THE UNFAITHFUL LOT IS INVOLVED IN THE JUDGMENT. He and his goods are

taken. For while before it is said he pitched his tent near to Sodom, now we find that he is *in* Sodom.

III. The MEDIATION OF ABRAM, representative of that of God's people in the world, procures the deliverance of the backsliding. He has already succeeded in drawing strength to himself; and doubtless Abram the Hebrew represented a nucleus of higher life even in that land of the idolatrous and degenerate which was recognised as in some sense a refuge to which men could appeal.

IV. The VICTORY OF THE CHILD OF GOD, with his small company, over the great army of heathen is typical. It represents, like the victory of David over Goliath, &c., the superior might of the spiritual world (cf. 1 Cor. i. 27—31).

V. The HOMAGE PAID TO ABRAM as the conqueror both by the heathen king of Sodom and the priest-king of Salem is typical of the superior position of the covenant people. Abram gave tithes to Melchizedek (cf. Heb. vii. 1—7) as an acknowledgment of the superiority of the position of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek blessed Abram as the possessor of the promise. The idea is that Melchizedek was the priest of a departing dispensation, Abram the recipient of the old and the beginning of the new.

VI. ABRAM'S STRICT SEPARATION from the worldly power, which he rested on an oath of faithfulness to God, shows that he is decidedly advancing in spiritual character. The contrast is very striking between his conduct and that of Lot. He at the same time does not attempt to enforce his own high principle upon others. The Church of God has suffered much from its attempts to apply its own high rules to the world instead of leaving the world to find out for itself their superiority and adopt them.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 13.—**And there came one that had escaped.** Literally, *the fugitive party*, the article denoting the genus, as in "the Canaanite," ch. xii. 6 (*vide* Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 277, *a.*). **And told Abram the Hebrew.** "The immigrant" *transfluvialis*, *ὁ περάτης*, from beyond the Euphrates, if applied to the patriarch by the inhabitants of Palestine (LXX., Aquila, Origen, Vulgate, Keil, Lange, Kalisch); but more probably, if simply inserted by the historian to distinguish Abram from Mamre the Amorite, "the descendant of Eber" (Lyra, Drusius, Calvin, Bush, Candlish, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary;' *vide* on ch. x. 21). **For he dwelt**—literally, *and* (sc. at that time) *he was dwelling*—**in the plain** — rather "oak groves" (*vide* ch. xiii. 18)—**of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner,** concerning whom nothing is certainly known beyond the fact that they were Canaanitish chieftains (probably possessing some remnant of the true faith, like Melchisedeck) with whom the patriarch entered into an offensive and defensive alliance. **And these were confederate**—literally, *lords of covenant*, i. e. masters or possessors of a treaty (cf. "lord or possessor of dreams," ch. xxxvii. 19; "lords or masters of arrows," 2 Kings i. 8); rendered *συνωμόται* (LXX.) = lords of the oath, as in Neh. vi. 18, *ἔνορκοι* (LXX.)—**wit Abram.**

Ver. 14.—**And when Abram heard that his brother**—so called as his brother's son, or simply as his relative (ch. xiii. 8)—**was taken captive, he**—literally, *and he*—**armed**—literally, *caused to pour forth*, i. e. drew out in a body, from a root signifying "to pour out" (Gesenius, Fürst); from a root meaning to unsheath or draw out anything as from a scabbard, and hence equivalent to *expedivit*, he got ready (Onkelos, Saadias, Rosenmüller, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Kalisch connects both senses with the root. The LXX., Vulgate, and others translate "numbered," reading יָדֶק for יָרֶק **his trained**—literally, *initiated*, instructed, but not necessarily practised in arms (Keil); perhaps only familiar with domestic duties (Kalisch), since it is the intention of the writer to show that Abram conquered not by arms, but by faith—servants, **born in his own house**—*i. e.* the children of his own patriarchal family, and neither purchased nor taken in war—**three hundred and eighteen**—which implied a household of probably more than a thousand souls—**and**—along with these and his allies (*vide* ver. 24)—**pursued** them—the victorious Asiatics—**unto Dan**—which is here substituted for its older name Laish, for which *vide* Josh. xix. 47 (Ewald), though regarded by some as not the Laish Dan conquered by the Danites, but probably Dan-jaan, mentioned in 2 Sam. xxiv. 6 (Hävernick, Keil, Kalisch); against which, however, is the statement of Josephus ('Ant.,' i. 10), that this Dan was one of the sources of the Jordan. Murphy regards

Dan as the original designation of the town, which was changed under the Sidonians to Laish (lion), and restored at the conquest. Clericus suggests that the Jordan fountain may have been styled Dan, "Judge," and the neighbouring town Laish, and that the Danites, observing the coincidence of the former with the name of their own tribe, gave it to the city they had conquered. Alford is doubtful whether *Dan-jaan* was really different from Laish.

Ver. 15.—**And he divided himself** (*i. e.* his forces) **against them, he and his servants** (along with the troops of his allies), **by night, and** (falling on them unexpectedly from different quarters) **smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah.** A place *Choba* is mentioned in Judith xv. 5 as that to which the Assyrians were pursued by the victorious Israelites. A village of the same name existed near Damascus in the time of Eusebius, and is "probably preserved in the village *Hoba*, mentioned by Troilo, a quarter of a mile to the north of Damascus" (Keil); or in that of *Hobah*, two miles outside the walls (Stanley, 'Syria and Palestine,' 414, *k.*), or in *Burzeh*, where there is a Moslem wely, or saint's tomb, called the sanctuary of Abraham (Porter's 'Handbook,' p. 492). **Which is to the left of** (*i. e.* to the north of, the spectator being supposed to look eastward) **Damascus.** The metropolis of Syria, on the river Chrysorrhoas, in a large and fertile plain at the foot of Antilibanus, the oldest existing city in the world, being possessed at the present day of 150,000 inhabitants.

Ver. 16.—**And he brought back all the goods.** *Col-harecush.* The LXX. translate *τὴν ἵππον*, as if they read רֶכֶשׁ for רְכֻשׁ. **And also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods.** *Καὶ πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ* (LXX.). **And the women also, and the people.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 13—16.—*The kinsman deliverer, or Abram's military expedition.* I. ABRAM'S ELEVATED PIETY. 1. *Self-forgetful magnanimity.* Had the patriarch possessed a less noble soul, the tidings of his nephew's capture would almost certainly have kindled in his breast a secret feeling of complacency. But not only in his behaviour on the occasion was there the complete absence of any such revengeful disposition as gloats with satisfaction over the punishment of a wrong-doer, there was something like a manifest unconsciousness of having ever suffered injury at Lot's hands at all. 2. *Brotherly compassion.* If he did sometimes admit to himself that his nephew had scarcely acted handsomely towards him, any feeling of resentment with which that reflection may have been associated was completely swallowed up by the sorrow which he felt for that nephew's fate. After all Lot was his dead brother's son, and was a child of God as well, and he could not choose but be affected by the melancholy news. Besides being self-forgetful, the piety of Abram was sympathetic. 3. *Active benevolence.* Meekly patient of injuries when inflicted on himself, the patriarch was ever ready to redress the wrongs of others, even of the undeserving. Nor was his philanthropy of that weakly benevolent sort which is always going to do some act of kindness to others, but never does it, or is so unaccountably slow in doing it that it comes to be practically of little use, or that would willingly extend a helping hand to the unfortunate if it could only be done without much trouble; on the contrary, it was prompt, decisive, energetic, and carried through with much labour, and at considerable risk to his own personal safety.

II. ABRAM'S MILITARY GENIUS. 1. *Unexpectedly evoked.* The last thing which ordinary minds would anticipate as an element in the character of one so good, pious, benevolent, and magnanimous as Abram the Hebrew, there is yet no essential incongruity between the talents of a soldier and the graces of a Christian; while as for the patriarch suddenly discovering all the qualities of a great commander, it is perhaps sufficient to reply that hitherto the crisis had not arrived to call them forth. The annals of warfare, both ancient and modern, attest that true military genius has not always been confined to professors of the soldier's art, but has oftentimes been discovered, of the rarest kind, in persons who, till summoned forth by Providence, have been engaged in peaceful callings. 2. *Brilliantly displayed.* In the gallant exploit of the patriarch are exhibited the tactics that from time immemorial have been adopted by all great generals—by Miltiades and Themistocles of Greece, by Julius Cæsar, by Belisarius, the general of Justinian, by Oliver Cromwell, by Napoleon, by Stonewall Jackson and Sherman of America, and again by Von Moltke of Prussia—celerity of movement, suddenness of attack, skilful division of forces, outflanking and

outmarching of the enemy (cf. Lange, p. 405). 3. *Completely successful.* The foe was defeated, the prisoners and spoil were recaptured, and it does not appear that Abram or his allies lost a man. That generalship is the best which accomplishes its object at the least expense of soldiers' blood and subjects' treasure.

III. Abram's wonder-working faith. It afforded—1. *A sufficient ground* on which to go to war. The question as to Abram's right to mingle in this contest in the Sodom valley is fairly answered by replying that Abram had the right (1) of natural affection to attempt the rescue of his relative, (2) of a sacred humanity to liberate the captive and punish the oppressor, and (3) of faith. Already God had given him the land, and we are fully warranted in regarding him as acting in this heroic expedition in the capacity of (under God) lord-paramount of the soil. 2. *The necessary power* with which to prosecute the war. Possessed of military genius though the patriarch was, it is not supposable that he entered upon this campaign against the trained armies of the conquering kings, pursuing them along a difficult and dangerous track, without first casting himself on the Almighty arm as his strength. And if that Almighty arm, in order to succour him, took the way of developing the capabilities for warfare which had hitherto been lying dormant in his soul, it was none the less true that the help which he received was Divine. 3. *The splendid victory* which resulted from the war. Whether the writer to the Hebrews (ch. xi. 34) thought of Abram when he spoke of faith's heroes subduing kingdoms and waxing valiant in the fight, it is apparent that Isaiah (ch. xli. 2, 3) ascribed the triumph of the son of Terah to the grace of God, which thus rewarded the faith which, in obedience to a Divine impulse, sprang to the relief of Lot.

IV. Abram's typical character. The symbolic foreshadowing of the great kinsman Deliverer is too obvious to be overlooked. 1. In his person the Lord Jesus Christ, like Abram, was the kinsman of those whom he delivered. 2. The work he undertook, like that of Abram, was the emancipation of his brethren. 3. As in the case of Abram, that work consisted in despoiling the principalities and powers of evil. 4. The motive by which he was impelled on this arduous warfare was, like that which inspired the patriarch, love for his kinsmen. 5. The promptitude of Christ in coming to the aid of men was typified by Abram's celerity in hastening to the rescue of Lot. 6. As the campaign of Abram, so the warfare of Christ was carried through at great expense of toil and suffering to himself. 7. In the faith of Abram was shadowed forth the calm reliance of the Saviour that all he did was in obedience to his Father's will. 8. The success with which the patriarch was rewarded was emblematic of the higher victory of Christ.

Learn—1. To imitate the piety of Abram. 2. To admire in him, if we cannot in ourselves, the possession of superior abilities. 3. To covet earnestly the wonder-working faith which he displayed. 4. To trust in the great kinsman Deliverer of which he was the type.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 13—16.—*Abram's expedition a sermon for the New Testament Church.* I. The little army; emblematic of the handful of Christ's disciples at the first, and of the comparative feebleness of the Church still; yet "God's strength is ever made perfect in weakness," and so "the weakness of God becomes stronger than men."

II. The trusty confederates; regarding the Amorite chieftains as possessors of the true faith, suggestive of the united purpose and action by which the Church of Christ in all its parts should be governed, and of the weakness that springs from divided counsels.

III. The rapid march; a picture of the holy celerity and earnest zeal with which the Church should set about her enterprise of conquering the world for Christ; a reminder of how much may be lost by delay.

IV. The skilful tactics; proclaiming the same doctrine as Christ—that his people should be wise as serpents; revealing the necessity for the Church making use of the most brilliant abilities she can command on all her different fields of action.

V. The splendid victory; a foreshadowing of the final triumph which awaits the Church, and of the blessing which, through its instrumentality, will eventually descend upon the world.—W.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 17.—**And the king of Sodom**—Bera, or his successor (*vide* ver. 10)—**went out to meet him** (*i. e.* Abram) **after his return from the slaughter** (perhaps too forcible an expression for mere defeat) **of Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him** (the entire clause from "after" is parenthetical), **at the valley of Shaveh.** A valley about two stadia north of Jerusalem (Josephus, 'Ant.,' viii. 10), supposed to be the valley of the Upper Kedron, where Absalom's pillar was afterwards erected (2 Sam. xviii. 10); which may be correct if the Salem afterwards mentioned was Jerusalem (*vide infra*); but if it was not, then the exact site of Shaveh must be left undetermined. **Which is the king's dale.** Or valley (*emek*); so styled because suitable for kingly sports or military exercises (Onkelos); because of its beauty (Poole); because Melchisedeck had his camp and palace there (Malvenda); or most likely because of the interview between him and Abram which there occurred (Keil, Lange), with which agrees the rendering τὸ πεδίον τῶν βασιλέων (LXX.).

Ver. 18.—**And Melchisedeck.** "King of righteousness" (Heb. vii. 2); an indication that the Canaanitish language was Shemitic, having been probably adopted from the original Shemite inhabitants of the country. Not a titular designation, like Augustus, Pharaoh, or Malek-ol-adel (*rex justus*) of the Mohammedan kings (Cajetan), but the name of a person; neither an angel (Origen), nor the Holy Ghost (Hieracas), nor some great Divine power (the Melchisedecians), all of which interpretations are baseless conjectures; nor Christ (Ambrose), which is contrary to Heb. vi. 20; nor Shem (Targums, Lyra, Willet, Luther, Ainsworth), which Heb. vii. 3 sufficiently negatives; but most probably a Canaanitish prince by whom the true faith was retained amid the gloom of surrounding heathenism (Josephus, Irenæus, Eusebius, Calvin, A Lapide, Delitzsch, Keil, Rosenmüller, Candlish, Bush), though it has been suggested that "the enlightenment of the king of Salem was but a ray of the sun of Abram's faith" (Kalisch), an opinion difficult to harmonise with Heb. vii. 4. **King of Salem** = "king of peace" (Heb. vii. 1). The capital of Melchisedeck was either Jerusalem, of which the ancient name was Salem, as in Ps. lxxvi. 2 (Josephus, Onkelos, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Bush); or a city on the other side Jordan *en route* from Damascus to Sodom (Ewald); or, though less likely, as being too remote from Sodom and the king's dale, Salem in the tribe of Ephraim, a city near Scythopolis, where the ruins of Melchisedeck's palace were said to exist (Jerome), and near to which John baptized (Bochart). **Brought forth bread and wine.** As a refreshment to the patriarch and his soldiers (Josephus, Calvin, Clarke, Rosenmüller), which, however, was the less necessary since the spoils of the conquered foe were in possession of Abram and his men (Kalisch); hence mainly as a symbol, not of his transference of the soil of Canaan to the patriarch, bread and wine being the chief productions of the ground (Lightfoot), or of his gratitude to Abram, who had recovered for the land peace, freedom, and prosperity (Delitzsch), or of the institution of the Supper by the Lord Jesus Christ (Bush); but of the priestly benediction which followed and of the spiritual refreshment which it conferred upon the soul of Abram (Kalisch, Murphy). The Romish idea, that the act of Melchisedeck was sacrificial, is precluded by the statement that he brought forth the bread and wine before the people, and not before God. **And he was the priest.** *Cohen;* one who undertakes another's cause, hence one who acts as mediator between God and man, though the primary signification of the root is doubtful and disputed. The necessity for this office has its ground in the sinfulness of man, which disqualifies him for direct intercourse with a holy Being (cf. Kurtz, 'Sacrificial Worship,' ch. i. *b.*). The occurrence of this term, here mentioned for the first time, implies the existence of a regularly-constituted form of worship by means of priests and sacrifices. Hence the Mosaic cultus afterwards instituted may only have been a resuscitation and further development of what had existed from the beginning. **Of the most high God.** Literally, *El-Elion*, a proper name for the Supreme Deity (occurring only here, in the narrative of Abram's interview with the kings); of which the first term, *El*, from the same root as Elohim (ch. i. 1, *q. v.*), signifies the Strong One, and is seldom applied to God without some qualifying attribute or cognomen, as El-Shaddai, or El, the God of Israel; and the second, *'Elion* (occurring frequently afterwards, as in Num. xxiv. 16; Deut. xxxii. 18; Ps. vii. 18; ix. 2), describes God as the High, the Highest, the Exalted, the Supreme, and is sometimes used in conjunction with Jehovah (Ps. vii. 18), and with Elohim (Ps. lvii. 3), while sometimes it stands alone (Ps. xxi. 8). Most probably the designation here describes the name under which the Supreme Deity was worshipped by Melchisedeck and the king of Sodom, whom Abram recognises as followers of the true God by identifying,

as in ver. 22, El-Elion with Jehovah (cf. Quarry, p. 426).

Ver. 19.—**And he blessed him** (in which act appears his distinctively sacerdotal character), **and said** (the form of the benediction is poetical, consisting of two parallel stanzas), **Blessed be Abram**—so Isaac blessed Jacob (ch. xxvii. 27), and Jacob Joseph (ch. xlviii. 15), conveying in each case a Divine benediction—**of the most high God**—לְ after a passive verb indicating the efficient cause (*vide* Gesenius, § 143, 2, and cf. Gen. xxxi. 15; Prov. xiv. 20)—**possessor**—so Onkelos and Calvin; but *koneh*, from *kanah*, to erect, set up, hence found or create, means founder and creator (Gesenius), combines the meanings of κτίζειν and κτᾶσθαι (Keil), contains no indistinct allusion to the doctrine of ch. i. 1 (Murphy), and is rendered ὃς ἔκτισε (LXX.) and *qui creavit* (Vulgate)—**of heaven and earth.**

Ver. 20.—**And blessed be the most high God** (cf. ch. ix. 26), **who hath delivered**—*miggen*, a word peculiar to poetry = *nathan* (cf. Prov. iv. 9; Hosea xi. 8)—**thine enemies**—*tsarecha*, also a poetical expression = *'ôyeb* (cf. Deut. xxxii. 27; Job xvi. 9; Ps. lxxxi. 15)—**into thy hand. And he**—not Melchisedeck (Jewish interpreters), but Abram (Josephus, LXX., Jonathan, Heb. vii. 6)—**gave him** (not Abram, but Melchisedeck) **tithes**—"tenths." These, being the customary offering to the Deity, were an acknowledgment of the Divine priesthood of Melchisedeck. The practice of paying tithes, primarily a voluntary tax for the servants of the sanctuary, appears to have obtained among different nations from the remotest antiquity (*vide* Dr. Ginsburg in 'Kitto's Cyclopedia,' art. Tithes). The tithal law was afterwards incorporated among the Mosaic statutes (Levit. xxvii. 30—33; Numb. xviii. 21—32)—**of all**—the spoils which he had taken (Heb. vii. 4.)

Ver. 21.—**And the king of Sodom** (who, though first coming, appears to have retired in favour of the greater personage, Melchisedeck, and to have witnessed the interview between him and Abram, but who now, on its termination, advances—**said unto Abram**,—perhaps anticipating that like donations from the spoils might be made to him as to Melchisedeck, in which case he evinced a remarkable degree of generosity—**Give me the persons**—literally, *the souls*, i. e. those of my people whom you have recovered (cf. ch. xii. 5, in which the term is employed to describe domestic slaves)—**and take the goods to thyself** (which, Michaelis observes, he was justly entitled to do by right of conquest).

Ver. 22.—**And Abram said unto the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand**—a common form of swearing (Deut. xxxii. 40; Ezek. xx. 5, 6; Dan. xii. 7; Rev. x. 5, 6; cf. Virg., 'Æn.,' xii. 195)—**unto the Lord** (*Jehovah;* which, occurring in the present document, proves the antiquity of its use as a designation of the Deity), **the most high God,**—*El-Elion;* thus identifying Jehovah with the God of Melchisedeck, and perhaps of the king of Sodom (*vide supra*)—**the possessor of heaven and earth.**

Ver. 23.—**That I will not** take—literally, *if* (sc. I shall take); an abbreviation for "May God do so to me, if . . . !" (cf. 1 Sam. iii. 17; 2 Sam. iii. 35). The particle אִם has the force of a negative in adjuration—**from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing** (literally, *and if I shall take anything*) **that is thine,**—literally, *of all that* (*sc.* belongs) *to thee*—**lest thou shouldest say** (literally, *and thou shalt not say*), **I have made Abram rich.** Though not averse to accept presents from heathen monarchs (ch. xii. 16), the patriarch could not consent to share in the wealth of the impious Sodomites; in this a striking contrast to Lot.

Ver. 24.—**Save**—בִּלְעָדַי, compounded of בַּל, not, and עַד, unto = not unto; a particle of deprecation, meaning, "nothing shall come unto me" (cf. ch. xli. 16)—**only that which the young men**—נַעַר, a primitive word (cf. Sanscrit, *nara*, man; *narî, nârî*, woman; Zend., *nære;* Greek, ἀνήρ), applied to a new-born child (Exod. ii. 26; 1 Sam. iv. 21), a youth of about twenty (ch. xxxiv. 19; xli. 12), a servant, like παῖς (ch. xxxvii. 2; 2 Kings v. 20), a common soldier (1 Kings xx. 15, 17, 19; 2 Kings xix. 6)—**have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 17—24.—*Visited by kings.* I. THE KING OF SALEM. 1. *His exalted person.* Neither a supramundane being, an angel, the Holy Ghost, or Christ; nor one of the early patriarchs, such as Enoch or Shem; but a Canaanitish (Shemite?) prince, whose capital was Salem (Jerusalem), and who united in his person the double function of priest and monarch of his people; probably the last official representative of the primitive religion, who here advances to meet and welcome the new faith in the person of Abram, as at a later period John Baptist recognised and saluted

Christ. 2. *His twofold designation.* Melchisedeck, king of Salem, *i. e.* king of righteousness and king of peace (Heb. vii. 2); descriptive of—(1) *Personal excellence.* Pious in spirit and peace-loving in disposition, he was not only fitted to be a type of the Meek and Holy One, but admirably qualified to be a governor of men and a minister of religion. Happy the land whose throne is filled by purity and love, and the Church whose teachers illustrate by their lives the religion they profess! (2) *Regal sway.* Righteous in principle, as a consequence his kingly rule was peaceful in administration; thus again constituting him an eminent foreshadowing of the righteous King and Prince of peace, as well as an instructive pattern and guide to earth's rulers. When righteousness and peace occupy the throne they seldom fail to reign throughout the land. (3) *Priestly work.* The specific function of his sacerdotal office being to make peace between God and sinful men, probably by means of sacrifice, and thus to cover with righteousness as with a garment those who were exposed to condemnation, he a third time symbolised the great King-Priest of the New Testament Church; while at the same time he seemed to proclaim this important truth, that they who labour in the priest's office should diligently strive for the salvation of souls. 3. *His mysterious appearance.* Of unknown parentage, of unrecorded genealogy, of unchronicled existence, the unique personality of this grand old king-priest flashes meteor-like across the path of the conquering patriarch, emerging from the gloom of historical obscurity, and almost instantaneously vanishing into inscrutable seclusion. Spirit-taught writers of later times discerned in this ancient figure, so enigmatical and mysterious, a Divinely-appointed type of the ever-living High Priest, "the Son who is consecrated for evermore." 4. *His regal hospitality.* Whatever additional significance attached to the banquet on the plain of Shaveh, it was clearly designed as a refreshment for the victorious patriarch and his wearied soldiers. So should earthly monarchs gratefully and sumptuously reward those who at the risk of their lives maintain the cause and vindicate the rights of the oppressed within their borders. So does heaven's King provide for his toiling followers. 5. *His priestly benediction.* (1) The blessing conferred on Abram was not simply the expression of a wish, but the actual conveyance by Divine authority of the good which it proclaimed; and so is Christ invested with supreme power to bless and save. (2) The ascription of praise to God was a sincere declaration of the patriarch's gratitude for the heavenly succour vouchsafed in connection with his military expedition; and so should God's redeemed ones, whom he has delivered out of the hands of the enemy, cherish a lively recollection of Divine mercies, and offer heartfelt thanksgivings through the one Mediator. 6. *His public recognition.* In presence of the king of Sodom and his people, his confederates and their forces, as well as of his own domestics, the patriarch delivered into the hands of Melchisedeck a tenth part of the spoils. Designed as a solemn act of worship to Jehovah, it was both an acknowledgment of the claim which God's minister had upon his countenance and support, and a symbol of the service,—the voluntary devotement of a liberal portion of their substance,—which should by all saints be yielded to him who has been constituted a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck.

II. The king of Sodom. 1. *His courteous behaviour.* Displayed in retiring before Melchisedeck's advance, and deferring the prosecution of his suit till the termination of the king-priest's interview with the patriarch, it may be regarded as suggesting (1) the politeness which in all ranks of society, but especially in intelligent and educated circles, should regulate the intercourse of man with man; (2) the deference which should be paid, by even kings and those in authority, to the ministers of religion; (3) the homage which, though unwillingly, the world sometimes is obliged to render to the Church; and (4) the preference which should ever be assigned to heaven's business over that of earth. 2. *His generous proposal.* Made to Abram, this evinced—(1) *Lively gratitude* towards the patriarch for his distinguished services. Persons of known profligacy of character and life at times discover sparks of true nobility which proclaim them not entirely lost; and not unfrequently individuals not professing to be pious outshine the followers of Christ in acts of self-renunciation, and in thankful acknowledgment of benefits (Luke xvii. 17). (2) *Peaceful disposition* in himself, which, while it might have claimed the entire spoil, and perhaps vindicated the justness of such claim by an appeal to arms,

was forward to avoid strife by asking only the persons. Even the world may occasionally instruct the Church how to follow peace with all men. (3) *Remarkable discernment* as to the respective values of men and things, being prepared to forego the goods and chattels if only the persons were restored to his dominion. 3. *His rejected liberality.* Generous as from the king of Sodom's standpoint the proposal was, it was repudiated by the patriarch—(1) *In absolute entirety*, without the reservation of so much as a thread or shoe-latchet; another proof of the wholly unworldly character of the patriarch, another instance of self-sacrificing magnanimity, of a piece with his surrender of the land to Lot. (2) *With shuddering apprehension*, lest his fair name should be contaminated by participation in the wealth of Sodom. So should God's people not let their good be evil spoken of, and in particular look well to the channels through which the treasures that enrich them come. There is ever an important difference between the wealth which proceeds from the devil and that which is bestowed by the hand of Christ. (3) *With unmistakable sincerity*, as revealed by his solemn adjuration. God's name, while to be taken in vain by none, may on appropriate occasions be appealed to by his servants to vindicate their truthfulness. (4) *After equitable reservation* of the just claims of others, of the rations of his soldiers, which were not to be repaid, and the portions of his allies, which were not to be appropriated unless with their consent. The sacrifices made by God's people should be composed of their own, and not of their neighbour's property.

Learn—1. That God's faithful servants are sure to win the approbation of good men and the benediction of Heaven. 2. That the friendship of wicked men and the congratulations of the world should never be desired by the saints.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 18—20.—*A king-priest.* "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed Abraham," &c. When the king of Sodom was beaten in a war with Chedorlaomer, Lot was involved in the overthrow. Chedorlaomer was a warrior of great power, and his very name was terrible. Five confederate kings had in vain resisted him with his three auxiliaries. He whom kings could not oppose the simple patriarch Abraham, with armed herdsmen, will attack and conquer. His kinsman Lot is in captivity; Abraham will deliver him or die in the attempt. How nobly shines the character of Abraham in this determination. Lot had separated from him through a misunderstanding, and had chosen the most fertile district, and left Abraham the least promising, yet Abraham forgets all, when his relative is in danger. At great risk he undertakes his deliverance. He armed his "trained servants," pursues the enemy, comes upon them "by night," divides his small band into three companies, and makes an assault at once on the right, the centre, and flank of the enemy. He routs and pursues them, smiting many and taking much spoil. He accomplishes above all his one desire, the restoration of Lot to liberty. As Abraham returns, flushed with conquest, he is met at the gates of Salem by Melchizedek, bringing to him bread, wine, and the Divine benediction.

I. THE DESIGNATION AND CHARACTER OF MELCHIZEDEK. He is king and priest. His name means, king of righteousness. He dwells in Salem, the place of peace. He did not go out to war, and had no part in the quarrel between Chedorlaomer and the king of Sodom. He had lost no relatives, and had no reason for fighting. Had cunning foes attacked his city of peace, he would doubtless have driven them off if possible. A king of righteousness, he would not think it his duty to submit to unrighteousness. He was, however, left unattacked by the fierce Chedorlaomer, and took care to provoke no quarrel. Perhaps he was not assailed because universally respected as a man of peace and a priest of God. This reason may have availed in that early age, and in respect to the first war of which we have any account, but it is not certain that it would be accounted a sufficient reason now. Various have been the speculations as to who Melchizedek was. Some believed that he was Enoch come back to earth, or Job, the tried one; others, that he was Shem, the best son of Noah. This is possible, as, according to calculations made, Shem survived Abraham forty years; but it is improbable, because Moses would have spoken of

Shem by his proper name, and because that would not apply which is said of Melchizedek, in Heb. vii. 3—that he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." We know the ancestry of Shem, but not that of Melchizedek. The difficult passage, the third of the seventh chapter of Hebrews, means, probably, merely this—that his descent was not known, and that his priesthood was not inherited or derived from others, but one resting in his individual character. Thus Noah, Job, Hobab or Jethro, and Balaam acted as independent priests, and their offerings were recognised by God. Melchizedek, in his maintenance of the worship of God, came to be accepted as a priest, and his life was like a star shining amid the general heathenism of Canaan. He also came like a streak of light, neither the coming nor the going of which could easily be discerned. We are told of him that he was "without beginning of days or end of life." Some have therefore thought that Melchizedek was an angel or a pre-incarnation of Christ; if so, Christ would have been the type and the antitype. But that which is thought to be spoken of the man refers to his office; it was without definite beginning or ending. The Levitical priesthood had a definite beginning and ending; that of Melchizedek is never ended. The one stood in carnal ceremonies, the other in the power of a holy character. The Levitical was introduced because of the unfitness of all to become "kings and priests unto God;" but that of Melchizedek, being according to character, has no "end of days." It foreshadowed the priesthood of Christ, whose work never passeth away, but who abideth a priest continually. Melchizedek was a type of Christ, the one great High Priest, the holiest of all on earth, and who enters for us into the holiest place. The omissions concerning parentage or the beginning of his priesthood were probably designed by God, that in Melchizedek—the most prominent of patriarchal priests—there might be a more significant type of him who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. This would explain the force of the prophecy in Ps. cx., and the words in Heb. vii. Indeed the Levitical priesthood could not supply a perfect type, for it had no one who was at once a priest and king. Moses claimed not to be priest or king. David ventured not to intrude into the priestly office. Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, when he blessed the people, gave sacrifices for the priests to offer, but he slew them not. Uzziah attempted to intrude into the priestly office, but was stricken with leprosy. Under the Jewish dispensation there was no one who in his person could represent the twofold character of Christ as the only High Priest and universal King. Under the patriarchal dispensation, and in Melchizedek, there is this very plain type of Christ in his priestly and regal character. Melchizedek may never have imagined how great was the dignity put upon him as a type of Christ. Living a quiet, pure, and devoted life, he becomes accepted by his fellows as a priest of the Most High, and becomes the type of him who was the Saviour of the world.

II. The significance in the recorded acts of Melchizedek. 1. Refreshing the weary. "Brought forth bread and wine," that Abraham might eat and be strengthened. Possibly part of the wine was poured out as an oblation. When those who met wished to seal a friendship, they brake bread or partook of a meal together. Thus the Lord's Supper is the indication of our union with Christ—of a friendship on his part for us sinners, cemented by his suffering. He gave himself to be the Bread of Life for us. We are in a spiritual sense to eat of his flesh and drink of his blood, or we have no life in us. Christ oft thus comes forth to meet the weary pilgrims and soldiers of the cross. We must remember that it is the previous weary march, the confusion and the conflict, that fits us for the enjoyment of the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper. We have had to battle with temptations of various kinds, and come stained with the dust and blood of battle to the table of our Lord, and here he meets us and refreshes us. We begin here to see the meaning of all the conflict and burden of life. His word acquires more meaning, and his Spirit rests upon us with greater power, as, just outside the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, we sit and rest awhile ere pursuing our way and battling again with sin. What thoughtfulness there was in this act of Melchizedek! Single acts like these tell what is the character of a man. How it hints at the thoughtfulness of Christ for us in all our spiritual struggles! 2. Melchizedek also "blessed" Abraham. He pronounced upon him the blessing which belongs to an unselfish

performance of duty. God's blessing is Abraham's great reward, and a man was its mouthpiece. Because God's approval was his reward he would not retain the spoil, although urged by the king of Sodom to keep the goods, and simply hand over the persons of his captive subjects. The approval of God expressed through conscience or the words of the good should be the Christian's one desired reward. The blessing will always come in the way of duty. 3. Melchizedek claimed the honour of the victory for God. "Blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand." Before the king of Sodom Abraham is reminded of his dependence on God; thus before the world the Christian shows forth his dependence on the Spirit's help and "on the Lord's death till he come." We may never be ashamed to confess Christ. Abraham readily recognised the claim of God. He gave as a thank offering a tenth part of all he had taken. That which he gave, was his by custom and right. He gives it to God. God would not accept that which is wrung, by force, from another. He would say, "Who hath required this at your hand?" "I hate robbery for burnt offering." God only accepts that which is righteously and willingly offered. If taxes are imposed men pay them, but often when it is left to their conscience they neglect their duty. Better, however, that no tenth or tithings, no ratings and taxings, should be paid than that God's cause should be sustained unwillingly. As God gives us all we possess in love, as he sustains and pardons us in love, the least we can do is to love him and readily serve in return. We should devote all we are and have to Christ. Talents and possessions are his, and should be held in stewardship as from him. Let us not, however, make the mistake of thinking that it is by our gifts or good works we are saved. Many err here. It is only through Christ that our doings or persons can be accepted, even as Abraham's gifts were through Melchizedek. Christ is our Priest and Sacrifice. Do not attempt to slight him. Trust in his merits, work, and intercession. Let him have the pre-eminence. Christ must rule in our hearts and lives. The will must be given into his hands. Life must be held as a gift from him, and eternal life will be his certain bestowal hereafter. 4. Melchizedek gave to Abraham cheering words and stimulus. This was more almost than the refreshment. Here, as we meet in communion with one another and with Christ, we have great joy. Christ cheers us. We feel we can go forth boldly, and that when sin meets us we can, in Christ's strength, say, "Stand aside;" when hopes are cut off, as Lot was from his home, we can recover them through the cross. Thus our arms are nerved and hearts made strong for the future conflict. All the joy, however, is only a foretaste of that which will be ours when Christ shall meet us at the gate of the New Jerusalem, and shall lead us in to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Melchizedek, and all those who have been faithful to him. What will be our joy when we shall enter to abide in the "city of peace" with the "King of righteousness" for ever! May none of us know what will be the bitter pain of those who shall vainly call from without, because the door is shut, and the Master has entered in with those who were ready.—H.

Ver. 19.—*Melchizedek blessing Abraham.* "And he blessed him, and said, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." Wherever in Scripture Melchizedek is spoken of, it is as a type of Christ (Ps. cx. 4; Heb. v., vi., vii.). We may so regard him here, and consider his act in its typical light. Outwardly the transaction was of little mark. A band of men under Chedorlaomer carried off Lot, along with other spoil, from Sodom. Abram, on learning this, armed his household, pursued the invaders, routed them, and set the captives free. On his return Melchizedek, the head of a tribe near the line of march, came out to offer refreshment to his men; and as priest of his tribe he blessed Abram. Whether the type was understood by Abram or Melchizedek matters not. These things are written for our learning. We see in them Christ bestowing his blessing.

I. The occasion of the blessing. After conflict. Our Lord the antitype of Melchizedek, as King of peace (Isa. ix. 6; cf. Luke ii. 14; John xiv. 27). Yet the Christian life is emphatically one of warfare (Ephes. vi. 11—13; 2 Tim. ii. 3; cf. Gen. xxxii. 24; 1 Pet. v. 8; also Rev. ii., iii.—"to him that overcometh," &c.). The nature of that fight is against temptations to unbelief. The fight of faith (1 Tim.

vi. 12). The renewal under Christ of the battle lost in Eden (2 Tim. iv. 7; 1 John v. 4). Circumstances may vary. The trial may be apparent or not. There may be no outward suffering, no visible hindrance. But what a struggle is implied in 2 Cor. x. 5. It is the struggle against unbelief; to resist the power of things seen; to overcome "How can these things be?" to realise habitually the "city which hath foundations" (cf. Phil. iii. 20); to rest on God's promises in simplicity (Phil. iii. 7). As often as this struggle is honestly waged a blessing is bestowed (James i. 2; cf. Matt. vii. 13; xvi. 24; Acts xiv. 22). We naturally love spiritual ease, but trial is better (Ps. cxix. 71).

II. THE SOURCE OF THE BLESSING. "The most high God, possessor," &c. 1. All blessing is from God. We acknowledge this; but Isa. x. 13 is a natural feeling. We instinctively look to second causes; yet without this "looking upward" we cannot truly pray, "Thy will be done;" we cannot really live a Godward life. Compare Melchizedek's words with our Lord's (John xiv. 13—16; xvi. 23), and their fulfilment in his receiving for men (Ps. lxviii. 18) all needful gifts—forgiveness, sonship, right to pray, means of grace, opportunities of work. 2. All creation used by him as means of bestowing his blessing (cf. Rom. viii. 28). Sorrows (Rom. v. 3; Heb. xii. 11) and joys (Rom. ii. 4) are alike instruments of good (cf. Ps. cxvi. 12; cxix. 67).

III. THE FRUIT OF THE BLESSING. Closer walk with God. The events of this chapter were followed by more vivid spiritual manifestations to Abram. And thus our spiritual life advances. The blessing is God's free gift; but through conflict with evil the soul is prepared to receive it (cf. Ps. xcvii. 10). As in natural life powers are increased by exercise, or rather by God's gift on this condition, so in the spiritual the conflict of self-denial, our Saviour's blessing, and the "spirit of adoption" are inseparably linked together. "Grace for grace" should be the Christian's motto; ever pressing onwards. And as we can assign no limits to God's blessing, so neither is there any limit to our nearness to him.—M.

Ver. 20.—*The Church militant.* I. THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH. Like Abram's —1. Numerous. 2. Formidable. 3. Exulting.

II. THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH. Like Abram's—1. Certain. 2. Complete. 3. Final.

III. THE THANKSGIVING OF THE CHURCH. Like Abram's—1. Due to God most high. 2. Offered through the priest of the most high God. 3. Expressed in self-consecration to the service of God.—W.

Vers. 22, 23.—*Abraham's independent spirit.* "And Abraham said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet," &c. When Lot chose the plains of Sodom he knew not what trials awaited him there. The king of Sodom was attacked and defeated. He escaped, but many of his subjects were either slaughtered or made captive. Lot was carried away by the invading host. Abraham delivers him. On his return, flushed with victory, he is met by two persons—Melchizedek and the king of Sodom. To the first he gives tithes, as a thank offering; from the second he will not receive anything for all the risk he had run in the conflict. If Abraham had taken all the spoil, it would only have been in accordance with the general practice of that age; but a principle, and not a custom, is his guide.

I. ABRAHAM WISHED TO AVOID PLACING HIMSELF UNDER OBLIGATION TO A WORLDLY MAN.

II. ABRAHAM WISHED TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF TOO GREAT INTIMACY WITH AN UNRIGHTEOUS MAN.

III. ABRAHAM WISHED TO SHOW THAT THE SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH GOD CAN DO GOOD WITHOUT HOPE OF REWARD.

IV. ABRAHAM WISHED TO SHOW HOW UNDESIRABLE A PRACTICE IT WAS, TO GAIN BY THE MISFORTUNES OF OTHERS.

V. ABRAHAM WISHED TO SHOW THAT GOD, AND A SPIRIT OF CONTENTEDNESS, WERE A GOOD MAN'S TRUE RICHES.

How much better to act thus than to permit the ungodly to point the finger of scorn and say, with respect to professedly religious men, that they are just as greedy and worldly as the most irreligious.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1.—**After these things**—the events just recorded—**the word of the Lord**—*Debar Jehovah;* the first occurrence of this remarkable phrase, afterwards so common in the Hebrew Scriptures (Exod. ix. 20; Numb. iii. 16; Deut. xxxiv. 5; 1 Sam. iii. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 6, *et passim*). That this was a personal designation of the pre-incarnate Logos, if not susceptible of complete demonstration, yet receives not a little sanction from the language employed throughout this narrative (cf. vers. 5, 7, 9, 13, 14, &c.). At least the expression denotes "the Lord manifesting himself by speech to his servant" (Murphy; *vide* ch. i. 3)—**came** (literally, *was*) **unto Abram in a vision**—a night vision, but no dream (*vide* ver. 5). Biblically viewed, the vision, as distinguished from the ordinary dream, defines the presentation to the bodily senses or to the mental consciousness of objects usually beyond the sphere of their natural activities; hence visions might be imparted in dreams (Numb. xii. 6), or in trances (Numb. xxiv. 4, 16, 17). **Saying, Fear not, Abram.** With allusion, doubtless, to the patriarch's mental dejection, which was probably occasioned by the natural reaction consequent upon his late high-pitched excitement (cf. 1 Kings xix. 4), which might lead him to anticipate either a war of revenge from the Asiatic monarchs (Jonathan), or an assault from the heathen Canaanites, already jealous of his growing power, or perhaps both. Wordsworth observes that the words here addressed to Abram are commonly employed in Scripture to introduce announcements of Christ (Luke i. 13, 30; ii. 10; John xii. 15; cf. St. John's vision, Rev. iv. 1). **I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.** Literally, *thy reward, exceeding abundantly*, the hiphil inf. abs. הַרְבֵּה being always used adverbially (cf. Neh. ii. 2; iii. 33). The other rendering, "thy reward is exceeding great" (LXX., Rosenmüller, Delitzsch, Ewald), fails to give prominence to the thought that the patriarch's reward was to be the all-sufficient Jehovah himself. It is not needful to suppose with Lange an actual vision of a shield and treasure.

Ver. 2.—**And Abram said, Lord God.** *Adonai Jehovah;* the first use of these terms in combination, the second, which usually has the vowel-points of the first, being here written with the vocalisation of Elohim. *Adonai*, an older plural form of *Adonim, pluralis excellentiæ* (Gesenius), though by some the termination is regarded as a suffix (Ewald, Fürst), is a term descriptive of the Divine sovereignty, from *adan* = *dun*, or *din*, to rule or judge; connected with which is the Phœnician *adon*, an honorary epithet of deity, and recognised as such in Deut. x. 17 (*vide* Fürst, 'Hebrew Lexicon,' *sub voce*). **What wilt thou give me, seeing I go** — literally, *and I going* = ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπολύομαι (LXX., Jonathan); *ex hac vita discedam* (Rosenmüller); but this, though the word "go" is sometimes used in the sense of "die" (Ps. xxxix. 14), does not seem necessary—**childless**—solitary, desolate, hence devoid of offspring, as in Levit. ch. xx. 20, 21; Jer. xxii. 30 — **and the steward**—*Ben-Meshek;* either (1) the son of running (from *shakak*, to run) = *filius discursitatis*, i. e. the steward who attends to my domestic affairs (Onkelos, Drusius); or, and with greater probability, (2) the son of possession (from *mashak*, to hold), *i. e.* the possessor of my house, or heir of my property (Gesenius, Fürst, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch)—**of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.** Literally, *Dammesek Eliezer*. The paronomasia of this utterance is apparent, and was obviously designed to impart a touch of pathos to the patriarch's grief by pointing out the coincidence that the *Ben-Meshek* of his house was either *Dammesek* (Damascus) in the person of Eliezer (Delitzsch, Keil), or the Damascene Eliezer (Onkelos, Syriac, Aben Ezra, Calvin, Lange, Murphy), or *Dammesek-Eliezer* as one word (Kalisch).

Ver. 3.—**And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house** (literally, *the son of my house*, i. e. Eliezer) **is mine heir.** The language of the patriarch discovers three things: (1) a natural desire to have a child of his own; (2) a struggle to hold on by the promise in face of almost insuperable difficulties; and (3) an obvious unwillingness to part with the hope that the promise, however seemingly impossible, would eventually be realised. This unwillingness it was which caused him, as it were, so pathetically to call the Divine attention to his childless condition; in response to which he received an assurance that must have thrilled his anxious heart with joy.

Ver. 4.—**And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not**

be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

Ver. 5.—**And he** (Jehovah, or "the Word of the Lord") **brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them** (a proof that Abram's vision was not a dream): **and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.** Hence it has been inferred that Abram's vision was miraculously quickened to penetrate the depths of space and gaze upon the vastness of the stellar world, since the stars visible to the naked eye would not represent an innumerable multitude (Candlish).

Ver. 6.—**And he believed in the Lord.** The hiphil of the verb *aman*, to prop or stay, signifies to build upon, hence to rest one's faith upon; and this describes exactly the mental act of the patriarch, who reposed his confidence in the Divine character, and based his hope of a future seed on the Divine word. **And he counted it to him.** *'Ελογίσθη αὐτῷ* (LXX.), which is followed by nearly all the ancient versions, and by Paul in Rom. iv. 3; but the suffix ךָ (a feminine for a neuter, as in Job v. 9; Ps. xii. 4; xxvii. 4; *vide* Glass, 'Phil.,' lib. iii. cp. i. 19), clearly indicates the object of the action expressed by the verb חָשַׁב, to think, to meditate, and then to impute (*λογίζομαι*), followed by לְ of pers. and acc. of the thing (cf. 2 Sam. xix. 20; Ps. xxxii. 2). The thing in this case was his faith in the Divine promise. **For righteousness.** צְדָקָה = *εἰς δικαιοσύνην* (LXX.); neither for merit and justice (Rabbi Solomon, Jarchi, Kalisch), nor as a proof of his probity (Gesenius, Rosenmüller); but unto and with a view to justification (Rom. iv. 3), so that God treated him as a righteous person (À Lapide), not, however, in the sense that he was now "correspondent to the will of God both in character and conduct" (Keil), but in the sense that he was now before God accepted and forgiven (Luther, Calvin, Murphy, Candlish), which "passive righteousness," however, ultimately wrought in him an "active righteousness of complete conformity to the Divine will" ('Speaker's Commentary').

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—6.—*Under the stars with God.* I. DEJECTED BEFORE GOD. 1 *Apprehensive of danger.* Victorious over the Asiatic monarchs, Abram nevertheless dreaded their return. Signal deliverances are not seldom followed by depressing fears; *e. g.* David (1 Sam. xxvii. 1) and Elijah (1 Kings xix. 10). Having emancipated the people of the land by breaking "the yoke of their burden, and the staff of their shoulder, the rod of their oppressor," he yet feared an outbreak of their hostility. The enmity of those they serve is not an infrequent reward of patriots: witness Moses (Exod. xvii. 4) and Christ (John x. 31). 2. *Disappointed in hope.* Notwithstanding repeated assurances that he would one day become a mighty nation, the long-continued barrenness of Sarai appears to have lain upon his heart like a heavy burden. Partaking to all more or less of the nature of a deprivation, the lack of offspring was to Abram an acute grief and serious affliction. The pent-up yearnings of his nature, rendered the more intense by reason of the promise, could not longer be restrained. In language full of pathos he complains to God about his childless condition. So "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. xiii. 12). 3. *Anxious about the promise.* He could not discern the possibility of its fulfilment, with years rapidly advancing on himself and Sarai. It is doubtful if any saints, more than Abram, can predict beforehand how the Divine promises shall be accomplished. Yet a recollection of whose promises they are should enable them, as it might have assisted him, to perceive that not a single word of God's can fall to the ground. But, owing partly to limitations in the human mind and imperfections in the human heart, doubts insensibly insinuate themselves against even the clearest and the strongest evidence. And when danger, disappointment, and doubt conjoin to invade the soul, dejection must inevitably follow.

II. COMFORTED BY GOD. 1. *A shield for his peril.* Divinely given, all sufficient, ever present. "I," Jehovah, "am," now and always, "thy shield"—*i. e.* thine impregnable defence. And the like protection is vouchsafed to Abram's children when imperilled: as to character, Divine (Prov. xxx. 5); as to extent, complete, universal, defending from all forms of evil, warding off assaults from all quarters (Ps. v. 12); as to duration, perpetual (Ps. cxxi. 8). 2. *A solace for his sorrow.* Happy as the birth of an heir in Sarai's tent would make him, Jehovah gives him to understand that not that was to be his recompense for the trials he had passed

through, the sacrifices he had made, and the feats he had performed since leaving Ur, but himself. God's saints are prone to seek their happiness in God's gifts, rather than in the Giver. Here they are recalled along with Abram to the sublime thought that God himself is his people's best reward, and that the possession and enjoyment of his friendship should abundantly compensate for the absence of creature comforts, however dearly prized and ardently desired. 3. *A son for his heir.* Instead of Eliezer, whom in his perplexity he thought of adopting as his son, a veritable child of his own is promised. Let saints learn how blind is human reason, and how feeble faith becomes when it tries to walk by sight; let them also notice and consider how sure are God's promises, and how inexhaustible are God's resources.

III. Believing in God. 1. The *object* of Abram's faith. That at this stage of the patriarch's history attention is so markedly directed to his faith can only be explained on the supposition that he now for the first time clearly and implicitly received, embraced, and rested in the promise of a seed, and consequently of a Saviour. And the faith which justifies and saves under the gospel dispensation has an outlook nothing different from that of Abram. The object which it contemplates and appropriates is not simply the Divine promise of salvation, but the specific offer of a Saviour. God is the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26). 2. The *ground* of Abram's faith. Neither reason nor sense, but the solemnly given, clearly stated, perfectly sufficient, wholly unsupported word of God. And of a like description is the basis of a Christian's faith—God's promise in its naked simplicity, which promise (of a Saviour, or of salvation through Jesus Christ) has, like that delivered to Abram, been solemnly announced, clearly exhibited, declared to be perfectly sufficient, but left wholly unsupported in the gospel (John iii. 36). 3. The *acting* of Abram's faith. It was instantaneous, accepting and resting on the Divine promise the moment it was explicitly made known; full-hearted, without reservation of doubt or uncertainty, implicitly reposing on the naked word of God; and conclusive, not admitting of further opening of the question, "being fully persuaded that God was able also to perform that which he had promised" (Rom. iv. 21).

IV. Accepted with God. Whatever exegesis be adopted of the clause, "it was counted unto him for righteousness," the transaction which took place beneath the starry firmament is regarded in the New Testament as the pattern or model of a sinner's justification, and employed to teach—1. The *nature* of justification, which is the reckoning of righteousness to one in himself destitute of such excellence, and, on the ground of such imputed righteousness, the acquittal in the eye of the Divine law of one otherwise obnoxious to just condemnation. Possessing no inherent righteousness of his own, Abram had the righteousness of another (not at that time revealed to him) set to his account, and was accordingly justified or declared righteous before God. 2. The *condition* of justification, which is not works, but faith, Abram having been accepted solely on the ground of belief in the Divine promise (Rom. iv. 2—5); not, however, faith as an *opus operatum* or meritorious act, but as a subjective condition, without which the act of imputation cannot proceed upon the person. 3. The *time* of justification, which is the instant a soul believes, whether that soul be cognisant of the act or not, Abram again being justified, according to the Scripture, from the moment he accepted the Divine promise, though it is not said that Abram at the time was aware of the indemnatory act passed in his favour in the court of heaven.

Lessons:—1. God's saints may sometimes be cast down in God's presence (Ps. xliii. 5). 2. It is God's special character and care to comfort those who are cast down (2 Cor. vii. 6). 3. God's promises are the wells of comfort which he has opened for the solace of dejected saints.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xv.—*Faith.* The substance of this chapter is the special intercourse between Jehovah and Abram. On that foundation faith rests. It is not feeling after God, if haply he be found; it is a living confidence and obedience, based upon revelation, promise, covenant, solemn ratification by signs, detailed prediction of the future. God

said, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward"—*i. e.* I am with thee day by day as the God of providence; I will abundantly bless thee hereafter. The promise of a numerous offspring, of descendants like the stars for multitude, was not a merely temporal promise, it was a spiritual blessing set in the framework of national prosperity. "Abram believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (ver. 6; cf. Rom. iv.; Gal. iii.; Heb. xi.).

I. It was a FAITH IN THE PERSONAL, revealed, covenant Jehovah; not merely in a word, or in a sign, or in a prospect, but "in the Lord."

II. The GRACIOUS BOND OF RELATIONSHIP AND OF COVENANT. Faith on the one side, God dealing with a sinful creature as righteous on the other. The elements of that bond are (1) gracious acceptance, (2) gracious revelation, (3) gracious reward of obedience—in each case vouchsafed to faith. Thus the faith which justifies is the faith which sanctifies, for the sanctification, as the Apostle Paul shows in Rom. viii., is as truly the outcome of the grace which accepts as the acceptance itself.—R.

Ver. 1.—*What the Lord is to his people.* I. A SHIELD against—1. The charges of the law (Isa. xlv. 24). 2. The accusations of conscience (Rom. xv. 13). 3. The force of temptation (Rev. iii. 10). 4. The opposition of the world (Rom. viii. 31). 5. The fear of death (Heb. ii. 15).

II. A REWARD—1. For sufferings patiently endured (2 Tim. ii. 12). 2. For sacrifices cheerfully made (Matt. xix. 28). 3. For service faithfully accomplished (Rev. ii. 28).

Lessons:—1. Admire the exceeding richness of Divine grace. 2. Appreciate the fulness of Divine salvation. 3. Realise the height of Divine privilege accorded to the saint.—W.

Ver. 6.—*Faith and Righteousness.* "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Even by itself this passage claims attention. How does the idea of righteousness come into it at all? What is meant by "counting" or "imputation"? And what is the connection between belief and imputed righteousness? But it does not stand alone. (1) In Ps. cvi. 30 (cf. Num. xxv. 7) the same "counting" takes place on an act of an entirely different character; and (2) it is thrice quoted in the New Testament as an example of the action of faith in the spiritual life. Imputation must not be explained away. Its meaning is seen in Levit. vii. 18; xvii. 4; 2 Sam. xix. 19. There is here the germ of "the Lord our righteousness." In Rom. iv. 3—5, 23—25, St. Paul refers to it as an instance of justification by faith, connecting it with "the reward;" and this again with forgiveness and acceptance (Ps. xxxii. 2), the psalm almost repeating the words of the text (see also Gal. iii. 6). We need not suppose that now for the first time Abram was accepted of God, or that he alone was counted righteous. Mark, Abram believed not merely the particular promise, but "in the Lord." This instance is specially noticed by St. Paul as an instance of faith, because from the nature of the case there was no opportunity of action.

I. THE WORKING OF FAITH—simple belief of what God has said, because he is true; casting all care upon him. No merit in this. Faith is the channel, not the source of justification. By the look of faith the dying Israelites lived (Num. xxi. 9), but the healing was from God. God offers salvation freely (John vii. 37; Rev. xxii. 17), because he loves us even while in our sins (Ephes. ii. 4). What hinders that love from being effectual is unbelief. Many "believe a lie"—*e.g.* that they must become better ere they can believe (cf. Acts xv. 1). Primary lesson of practical Christianity is that we must begin by receiving, not by giving; must learn to believe his word because it is his word. This delivers from the spirit of bondage (Rom. viii. 15), and enables to ask with confidence (Rom. viii. 32). And this faith is counted for righteousness.

II. FAITH GROWS BY USE. It is the gift of God (Ephes. ii. 8), but it is given according to laws. Sometimes it springs up suddenly—*e.g.* Nathanael, St. Paul, the Philippian jailer; but usually it is like the growth of the seed, hardly to be traced—a gradual growth from efforts to live by faith. Let none think, I can believe when I will. The endeavour delayed will meet with many difficulties, suggestions of doubt,

or habits of indecision. And let none despise the training which prepares the soul to believe. It may seem to be labour in vain, yet the Holy Spirit may be working unseen to prepare the soul for life and peace.

III. Faith leads to holiness. It renders possible a service which cannot otherwise be given. The faith which was counted to Abram for righteousness formed the character which enabled him afterwards to offer up Isaac (cf. James ii. 21—23). Thus growth in holiness is the test of real faith. There is a faith which has no power (cf. James ii. 19; 1 Cor. xiii. 2; 2 Tim. iv. 10). It is with the heart that man believes unto righteousness (cf. Ps. lxxxiv. 6, 7; Prov. iv. 23).—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 7.—**And he** (Jehovah, or the Word of the Lord) **said unto him** (after the act of faith on the part of the patriarch, and the act of imputation or justification on the part of God, and in explication of the exact nature of that relationship which had been constituted between them by the spiritual transaction so described), **I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees** (*vide* ch. xi. 28), **to give thee this land to inherit** (or, to possess) **it.**

Ver. 8.—**And he said, Lord God** (*Adonai Jehovah;* vide ver. 2), **whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?** Not the language of doubt, though slight misgivings are not incompatible with faith (cf. Judges vi. 17; 2 Kings xx. 8; Luke i. 34), and questioning with God "is rather a proof of faith than a sign of incredulity" (Calvin); but of desire for a sign in confirmation of the grant (Luther), either for the strengthening of his own faith (Chrysostom, Augustine, Keil, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or for the sake of his posterity (Jarchi, Michaelis), or for some intimation as to the time and mode of taking possession (Murphy). Rosenmüller conceives the question put in Abram's mouth to be only a device of the narrator's to lead up to the subject following.

Ver. 9.—**And he said unto him, Take me** (literally, *for me,* i. e. for my use in sacrifice) **an heifer of three years old.** So rightly (LXX., Syriac, Samaritan, Arabic, Josephus, Bochart, Rosenmüller, Keil); not three heifers (Onkelos, Jarchi, Kimchi, *et alii*). **And a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old.** These offerings, afterwards prescribed by the law (Exod. xxix. 15; Num. xv. 27; xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3), were three in number, and of three years each, to symbolise him who was, and is, and is to come (Wordsworth); perhaps rather to indicate the perfection of the victim in respect of maturity (Murphy). Cf. Ganymede's offering (in 'Lucian's Dialogues') of a three years old ram for a ransom. **And a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon**—also prescribed by the law (Levit. i. 14; Luke ii. 24).

Ver. 10.—**And he took unto him all these, and divided** (a word occurring only here in Genesis, and supposed by Michaelis to have been taken by Moses from the ancient document from which he transcribed this portion of his work. The word is afterwards found in Cant. ii. 17, and Jer. xxxiv. 18) **them in the midst,**—μέσα (LXX.); in equal parts (Onkelos)—**and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.** So afterwards in the Mosaic legislation (Levit. i. 7). Wordsworth detects in the non-dividing of the birds an emblem of "the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of peace and love, which is a Spirit of unity," and of "Christ's human spirit, which was not divisible." Kalisch, with more probability, recognises as the reason of their not being divided the fact that such division was not required, both fowls being regarded as *one* part of the sacrifice only, and each, as the half, being placed opposite the other. Wordsworth numbers seven parts in the sacrifice, and sees a symbol of completeness and finality, the number seven being the root of *shaba,* to swear (Gesenius, p. 802); Kalisch reckons four, which he regards as "denoting perfection, but rather the external perfection of form than the internal one of the mind," and pointing "to the perfect possession of the Holy Land." The ritual here described is the same which was afterwards observed among the Hebrews in the formation of covenants (cf. ch. xxxiv. 18), and appears to have extensively prevailed among heathen nations (cf. 'Iliad,' b. 124, "ὅρκια πιστὰ ταμόντες;" and the Latin phrase, "fœdus icere").

Ver. 11.—**And when the fowls**—literally, *and the bird of prey,* a collective singular with the article, as in ch. xiv. 13, symbolising the Egyptians and other adversaries of Israel, as in Ezek. xvii. 3, 7, 12; xxxix. 4, 17; Rev. xix. 17, 18 (Knobel, Rosenmüller, Lange, Keil, Kalisch), which may be regarded as probable if the divided victims represented Israel in affliction, which is doubtful (*vide supra*). It does not appear necessary to attach any special significance to the descent of the vultures, which are always attracted towards carrion, and the introduction of which here completes the naturalness of the scene—**came down upon the carcases** (the

LXX. interpolates, ἐπὶ τὰ διχοτομήματα), **Abram drove them away.** Literally, *caused them to be blown away*, i. e. by blowing. "Though Abram is here represented as the instrument, yet the effect is to be ascribed primarily to the tutelar agency of omnipotence" (Bush; cf. Exod. xv. 10; Ezek. xxi. 31). The act of scaring the voracious birds has been taken to represent the ease with which Abram or Israel would ward off his enemies (Jonathan, Targums, Rosenmüller, Bush); the averting of destruction from the Israelites through Abram's merit (Kalisch, Keil); Abram's religious regard for and observance of God's treaty (Wordsworth); the patriarch's expectation that God was about to employ the sacrificial victims for some holy purpose (Alford); simply his anxiety to preserve the victims pure and unmutilated for whatever end they might have to serve (Murphy).

Ver. 12.—**And when the sun was going down.** Literally, *was about to go down* (cf. Gesenius, § 132). The vision having commenced the previous evening, an entire day has already passed, the interval being designed to typify the time between the promise and its fulfilment (Kalisch). **A deep sleep**—*tardemah* (cf. Adam's sleep, ch. ii. 21); ἔκστασις (LXX.); a supernatural slumber, as the darkness following was not solely due to natural causes—**fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness**—literally, *an horror, a great darkness*, i. e. an overwhelming dread occasioned by the dense gloom with which he was encircled, and which, besides being designed to conceal the working of the Deity from mortal vision (Knobel), was meant to symbolise the Egyptian bondage (Grotius, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch), and perhaps also, since Abram's faith embraced a larger sphere than Canaan (Heb. xi. 10, 14, 16), and a nobler seed than Sarah's son (John viii. 56), the sufferings of Christ (Wordsworth, Inglis) —**fell upon him.**

Ver. 13.—**And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety**—literally, *knowing know* (cf. ch. ii. 17; *vide* Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 312)—**that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land which is not theirs** (literally, *not to them*, viz., Egypt, or Egypt and Canaan, according to the view which is taken of the point of departure for the reckoning of the 400 years), **and shall serve them** (*i. e.* the inhabitants of that alien country); **and they** (*i. e.* these foreigners) **shall afflict them**—three different stages of adverse fortune are described:—(1) exile; (2) bondage; (3) affliction (Murphy); or the two last clauses depict the contents of the first (Kalisch)—**four hundred years.** The duration not of their affliction merely, but either of their bondage and affliction, or more probably of their exile, bondage, and affliction; either a round number for 430 (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Alford), to be reckoned from the date of the descent into Egypt (Kalisch, Lange), as Moses (Exod. xii. 39) and Stephen (Acts vii. 6) seem to say, and to be reconciled with the statement of Paul (Gal. iii. 17) by regarding the death of Jacob as the closing of the time of promise (Lange, Inglis); or an exact number dating from the birth of Isaac (Willet, Murphy, Wordsworth), which was thirty years after the call in Ur, thus making the entire interval correspond with the 430 years of Paul, or from the persecution of Ishmael (Ainsworth, Clarke, Bush), which occurred thirty years after the promise in ch. xii. 3.

Ver. 14.—**And also that nation** (the name of which he does not reveal, in case of seeming to interfere with the free volition of his creatures, who, while accomplishing his high designs and secret purposes, are ever conscious of their moral freedom), **whom they shall serve, will I judge**:—*i. e.* punish after judging, which prediction was in due course fulfilled (Exod. vi. 11)—**and afterward shall they come out with great substance**—*recush* (cf. ch. xiii. 6; *vide* Exod. xii. 36).

Ver. 15.—**And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace** (cf. ch. xxv. 8; xxxv. 29; xlix. 33). Not a periphrasis for going to the grave (Rosenmüller), since Abram's ancestors were not entombed in Canaan; but a proof of the survival of departed spirits in a state of conscious existence after death (Knobel, Murphy, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis), to the company of which the patriarch was in due time to be gathered. The disposal of his remains is provided for in what follows. **Thou shalt be buried in a good old age.**

Ver. 16.—**But in the fourth generation**—τετάρτῃ δὲ γενεᾷ (LXX.); but, more correctly, *the fourth generation*, calculating 100 years to a generation. "Caleb was the fourth from Judah, and Moses from Levi, and so doubtless many others" (Bush). Drs. Oort and Kuenen, reckoning four generations as a far shorter space of time than four centuries, detect a contradiction between this verse and ver. 13, and an evidence of the free use which the ancient and uncritical Israelitish author made of his materials ('Bible for Young People,' vol. i. p. 158). On the import of דּוֹר *vide* ch. vi. 9—**they shall come hither again** (literally, *shall return hither*): **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.** Literally, *for not completed the iniquity of the Amorites* (vide ch. xiv. 7; here put for the entire population) *until then* (the same word as "hither," which is its usual signification).

Ver. 17.—**And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down,**—literally, *and it was* (*i. e.* this took place), *the sun went down;* less accurately, ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγίνετο πρὸς

δυσμὰς (LXX.), which was the state of matters in ver. 12. Here the sun, which was then setting, is described as having set—**and it was dark,**—literally, *and darkness was*, *i. e.* a darkness that might be felt, as in ver. 12; certainly not *φλὸξ ἐγίνετο* (LXX.), as if there were another flame besides the one specified in the description—**behold a smoking furnace,**—the תַּנּוּר, or Oriental furnace, had the form of a cylindrical fire-pot (cf. Gesenius, p. 869; Keil *in loco*)—**and a burning lamp**—a lamp of fire, or fiery torch, emerging from the smoking stove; an emblem of the Divine presence (cf. Exod. xix. 18)—**that passed between those pieces**—in ratification of the covenant.

Vers. 18—21.—**In that day the Lord made a covenant**—literally, *cut a covenant* (cf. *ὅρκια τέμνειν*, *fœdus icere*). On the import of בְּרִית *vide* ch. ix. 9)—**with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt**—the Nile (Keil, Kurtz, Hengstenberg, Kalisch) rather than the *Wady el Arish*, or Brook of Egypt (Knobel, Lange, Clarke), at the southern limits of the country (Numb. xxxiv. 5; Josh. xv. 4; Isa. xxvii. 12)—**unto the great river, the river Euphrates.** The ideal limits of the Holy Land, which were practically reached under David and Solomon (*vide* 1 Kings iv. 21; 2 Chron. ix. 26), and which embraced the following subject populations, ten in number, "to convey the impression of universality without exception, of unqualified completeness" (Delitzsch). **The Kenites,**—inhabiting the mountainous tracts in the south-west of Palestine, near the Amalekites (Numb. xxiv. 21; 1 Sam. xv. 6; xxvii. 10); a people of uncertain origin, though (Judges i. 16; iv. 11) Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, was a Kenite—**and the Kenizzites,**—mentioned only in this passage; a people dwelling apparently in the same region with the Kenites (Murphy), who probably became extinct between the times of Abraham and Moses (Bochart), and cannot now be identified (Keil, Kalisch), though they have been connected with Kenaz the Edomite, ch. xxxvi. 15, 42 (Knobel)—**and the Kadmonites,**—never again referred to, but, as their name implies, an Eastern people, whose settlements extended towards the Euphrates (Kalisch)—**and the Hittites,**—the descendants of Heth (*vide* ch. x. 15); identified with the Kheta and Katti of the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, and supposed by Mr. Gladstone to be the Kheteians of the 'Odyssey;' a powerful Asiatic tribe who must have early established themselves on the Euphrates, and spread from thence southward to Canaan and Egypt, and westward to Lydia and Greece, carrying with them, towards the shores of the Ægean Sea, the art and culture of Assyria and Babylon, already modified by the forms and conceptions of Egypt. The northern capital of their empire was Carchemish, about sixteen miles south of the modern Birejik; and the southern Kadesh, on an island of the Orontes (Prof. Sayce in 'Frazer's Magazine,' August, 1880, art. 'A forgotten Empire in Asia Minor')—**and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims** (*vide* ch. xiii. 7; xiv. 5), **and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites** (*vide* ch. x. 15—19). The boundaries of the Holy Land as here defined are regarded by some (Bohlen) as contradictory of those designated in Numb. xxxiv. 1—12. But (1) the former may be viewed as the ideal (or poetical), and the latter as the actual (and prosaic), limits of the country assigned to Israel (Hengstenbreg, Keil); or (2) the former may represent the maxima, and the latter the minima, of the promise, which admitted of a larger or a smaller fulfilment, according as Israel should in the sequel prove fit for its occupation (Augustine, Pererius, Willet, Poole, Gerlach, Kalisch, and others); or, (3) according to a certain school of interpreters, the former may point to the wide extent of country to be occupied by the Jews on occasion of their restoration to their own land, as distinguished from their first occupation on coming up out of Egypt, or their second on returning from Babylon; or (4) the rivers may be put for the countries with which the promised land was coterminous (Kurtz, Murphy); or (5) strict geographical accuracy may not have been intended in defining the limits of the land of promise ('Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 18.—*Taken into covenant.* I. THE BLESSING OF THE COVENANT. 1. The *ultimate* blessing, to which, in both the commencement and close of the present section, the prominence is assigned, was *a splendid inheritance*—the land of Canaan for his descendants, and for himself the better country, of which that earthly possession was a type. 2. The *mediate* blessing, through which alone the last could be reached, was *a distinguished seed*—a numerous posterity to occupy the land, and a living Saviour to secure for himself the better country. 3. The *proximate* blessing, to be enjoyed while as yet the second and the third were unfulfilled, was *a celestial alliance* by which Jehovah himself engaged to be his shield and exceeding great

reward. It is obvious that these are the blessings which the gospel confers on believers—a heavenly Friend, an all-sufficient Saviour, a future inheritance; whence the Abrahamic covenant was nothing different from the covenant of grace.

II. THE REASON OF THE COVENANT. The essential idea in a covenant being a visible pledge for the fulfilment of a promise, the necessity for such a guarantee on the present occasion, it is apparent, could not lie with God. On the contrary, the proposal on the part of God to bind himself by a superadded engagement to implement his own gracious and spontaneous promise was an explicit condescension, if not to the feebleness of the patriarch's faith, at least to the weakness of his human nature. Perhaps the recollection of who Jehovah was, and what he had already accomplished in bringing Abram from Ur, should have proved sufficient to authenticate the promise; but it would almost seem as if human nature, in its innocent no less than in its fallen state, instinctively craved the assistance of external symbols to enable it to clearly apprehend and firmly grasp the unseen and spiritual blessings that are wrapt up in God's promises. In the garden of Eden the tree of life was Adam's sacramental pledge of immortality; after the Flood the many-coloured rainbow was a sign to Noah; in the Hebrew Church material symbols of unseen verities were not awanting; while in the Christian Church the passover and circumcision have been replaced by the Lord's Supper and baptism. The reasons that required the institution of these external signs may be held as having necessitated the solemn ritual which was exhibited to Abram.

III. THE SYMBOLS OF THE COVENANT. 1. *The sacrificial victims.* Seeing that these were afterwards prescribed in the Mosaic legislation, which itself was a shadow of the good things to come, to be employed as propitiatory offerings, it is impossible not to regard them, though not necessarily understood as such by Abram, as types (not of Israel, Abram's seed after the flesh simply, nor of the Church of God generally, *i. e.* Abram's seed according to the spirit, though perhaps neither of these should be excluded, but) of Abram's greater Seed, whose perfect, Divinely-appointed, and substitutionary sacrifice alone constitutes the basis of the everlasting covenant. 2. *The smoking furnace and the burning lamp.* Compared with the smoke and fire that afterwards appeared on Sinai when Jehovah descended to covenant with Israel, and the pillar of cloud and fire that led the march of Israel from Egypt, these at once suggest their own interpretation. They were emblems of God's presence, and may be viewed as suggesting (1) the combination of justice and mercy in the Divine character, and (2) the twofold attitude in which the Deity exhibits himself to men according as they are his enemies or friends.

IV. THE IMPORT OF THE COVENANT. Partly through visible sign, partly in spiritual vision, partly by audible words, the patriarch was instructed as to—1. *The objective basis of his own justification*, which was neither personal merit nor faith considered as an *opus operatum*, but the Divinely-appointed sacrifice which God was graciously pleased to accept in propitiation for human sin. 2. *The true security for God's fulfilment of the promise*, which was not any outward sign or token, but the everlasting covenant which in mysterious symbol had been unfolded to him. 3. *The interval of discipline allotted to the heirs of the land;* for his descendants three generations of exile, servitude, and affliction, to prepare them for receiving Canaan in the fourth; and for himself a continual sojourning, without a final settling within its borders; in both cases emblematic of the saint's experience after justification and before glorification. 4. *The ultimate assumption of the inheritance by his seed*—a Divine voice solemnly foretelling their return from captivity, as it afterwards declared that his spiritual descendants should be emancipated and brought back to their celestial abode, and a Divine vision unfolding to his gaze the wide extent of territory they should eventually possess—perhaps the limits of the earthly land melting away, as his spirit stood entranced before the gorgeous panorama, into the confines of the better country. 5. *His own certain passage to the heavenly Canaan*, for which he was even at that time looking—a promise which belongs individually to all who are the children of Abram by faith in Jesus Christ.

See from this subject—1. The fulness of Divine blessing which the covenant contains. 2. The depth of Divine condescension which the covenant reveals. 3. The glorious securities which the covenant affords.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 7, 8.—*The strength and weakness of faith.* I. FAITH'S SOURCE OF STRENGTH. 1. Looking up to the Divine character—"I am the Lord." 2. Looking back to the Divine grace—"that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees." 3. Looking out to the Divine promise—"to give thee this land to inherit it."

II. FAITH'S OCCASION OF WEAKNESS. 1. Looking forward—the fulfilment of the promise seeming far away. 2. Looking in—discovering nothing either in or about itself to guarantee its ultimate realisation.—W.

Ver. 11.—*The silent worshipper.* I. THE NATURE OF ABRAM'S WORSHIP. 1. Divine in its appointment. 2. Simple in its ritual. 3. Sacrificial in its character. 4. Believing in its spirit. 5. Patient in its continuance. 6. Expectant in its attitude.

II. THE INTERRUPTIONS OF ABRAM'S WORSHIP. 1. *What they were.* The descent of the fowls may be regarded as emblematic of those obstructions to communion with God which arise from—(1) The principalities and powers of the air. (2) The persecutions and oppressions (or, where these are absent, the pleasures and engagements) of the world. (3) The disturbances and distractions of vain thoughts and sinful motions in the heart. 2. *How they were removed.* (1) By watchfulness. (2) By opposition. (3) By perseverance. (4) By Divine help—the breath of Abram's mouth being probably accompanied by a wind from God.

III. THE ACCEPTANCE OF ABRAM'S WORSHIP. This was proved—1. By the approach of God at night-fall towards the scene. 2. By the supernatural revelation accorded to the patriarch. 3. By the passage of the symbol of Jehovah's presence between the divided victims. 4. By the announcement that God had taken him into covenant with himself. 5. By the vision of the land which was granted to him.

Learn—1. The sinfulness and worthlessness of all forms of worship except that which God has appointed. 2. The need for self-examination and Divine assistance when engaged in serving God. 3. The certain acceptance and spiritual enrichment of those who worship God in spirit and in truth.—W.

Vers. 12—17.—*Abraham's watch and vision.* "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep," &c. The great blessings promised are still afar off. As yet Abraham has no son to hand down his name to potserity. By means of a vision God strengthened his faith. Weird is the picture in this fifteenth chapter. See the solitary sheik in the desert offering his varied sacrifice, then watching until the sun goes down to drive off the vultures from the slain offerings. His arms become weary with waving and his eyes with their vigils. As the sun sinks below the wide-spread horizon, and night quickly steals over the desert, a horror of great darkness creeps over his spirit. Then a deep sleep falls upon him, and in that sleep come visions and a voice. The vision was of a furnace and a shining lamp moving steadily between the divided emblems. Look at the meaning of that vision.

I. It indicated the ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFERINGS. Fire in the East is generally understood to be a solemn witness to any engagement. To confirm an oath some Orientals will point to the lamp and say, "It is witness." Nuptial ceremonies are sometimes solemnised by walking round a fire three times, and the parties uttering certain words meanwhile.

II. The furnace may have referred to THE NEED FOR PURIFICATION, AND THE LAMP TO THE CERTAINTY OF DIVINE GUIDANCE. 1. Both the Israel after the flesh and that after the spirit had to pass through the fire of persecution; but the lamp of truth had always been kept alight by the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors of the Church. 2. The life and work of Christ may also have been shadowed forth in that furnace and lamp. Christ knew the bitterness of betrayal, denial, and death; but he knew also the joy of conscious sinlessness, complete self-sacrifice, and unending power of salvation. 3. They illustrated the character of the life of many believers. Trial and joy must be intermingled. As Abraham saw the vision in connection with sacrifice, so on Calvary shall we best learn the meaning of the smoking furnace and burning lamp.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1.—**Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children** (literally, *bare not to him*, notwithstanding the promise; the barrenness of Sarai being introduced as the point of departure for the ensuing narrative, and emphasised as the cause or occasion of the subsequent transaction): **and she had**—literally, *to her* (there was)—**an handmaid, an Egyptian** (obtained probably while in the house of Pharaoh (ch. xii. 16)—**whose name was Hagar**—"flight," from *hagar*, to flee. Cf. Hegirah, the flight of Mahomet. Not her original designation, but given to her afterwards, either because of her flight from Egypt (Ambrose, Wordsworth), or because of her escape from her mistress (Michaelis, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Though not the imaginary or mythical (Bohlen), it is doubtful if she was the real (Ainsworth, Bush), ancestor of the Hagarenes (1 Chron. v. 10, 19, 20; xxvii. 31; Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 8).

Ver. 2.—**And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing.** Literally, *hath shut me up* (*i. e.* my womb, ch. xx. 18; συνέκλεισέ με, LXX.) *from bearing*. Her advancing age was rendering this every day more and more apparent. **I pray thee go in unto my maid** (cf. ch. xxx. 3, 9). It is so far satisfactory that the proposal to make a secondary wife of Hagar did not originate with Abram; though, as Sarai's guilt in making it cannot altogether be excused, so neither can Abram be entirely freed from fault in yielding to her solicitations. **It may be that I may obtain children by her.** Literally, *be built up by her;* from *banah*, to build, whence *ben*, a son (Deut. xxv. 9; Ruth iv. 11). Calvin notes that Sarai's desire of offspring was not prompted by natural impulse, but by the zeal of faith which made her wish to secure the promised benediction. As yet it had not been clearly intimated that Sarai was to be the mother of Abram's child; and hence her recourse to what was a prevalent practice of the times, while unjustifiable in itself, was a signal proof of her humility, of her devotion to her husband, and perhaps also of her faith in God. **And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.** "The faith of both was defective; not indeed with regard to the substance of the promise, but with regard to the method in which they proceeded" (Calvin).

Ver. 3.—**And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan** (*i. e.* in his eighty-fifth, and her seventy-fifth year; a note of time introduced, probably, to account for their impatience in waiting for the promised seed), **and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.** Afterwards styled a *pilgash* or concubine (ch. xxv. 6), she is here improperly called a wife *quæ præter Dei legem in alienum thorum inducitur* (Calvin), from whom the *pilgash* or concubine differed (1) in power over the family, which belonged solely to the true wife, not to the secondary; (2) in the manner of espousal, which in the case of the former was accompanied with solemn rites of espousal and liberal gifts of dowry; and (3) in privilege of issue, the offspring of the secondary wife having no title to inherit. The act of Sarai (cf. the similar behaviour of Stratonice, the wife of King Deiotarus, who, according to Plutarch, gave her maid Electra to her husband, and so obtained an heir to the crown) is as little to be imitated as the conduct of Abram. The apparent repetitions in vers. 1—3 do not require the hypothesis of different authorship (Tuch, Colenso, Bleek, Davidson) for their explanation, but are characteristic of the genius of Hebrew composition (cf. ch. vii. 1—10), and may even be considerably removed by connecting vers. 1, 2 with ch. xv., and commencing the new sub-section with ch. xvi. 3 (Quarry, p. 331).

Ver. 4.—**And he went in unto Hagar.** אֶל בּוֹא, a linguistic peculiarity of the Jehovist, occurring ch. xxix. 21, 30; xxx. 3, 4; xxxviii. 2, 9, 16 (Vaihinger, Davidson); but by some partitionists chs. xxix. and xxx. are assigned to the Elohist (Tuch, Bleek, De Wette). **And she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.** As Hannah by Peninnah (1 Sam. i. 6); barrenness among the Hebrews having been regarded as a dishonour and reproach (ch. xix. 31; xxx. 1, 23; Levit. xx. 20), and fecundity as a special mark of the Divine favour (ch. xxi. 6; xxiv. 60; Exod. xxiii. 26; Deut. vii. 14). Whether Hagar imagined Sarai to be through her barrenness "*tanquam a Divino promisso repudiatam*" (Lyra), or anticipated Sarai's displacement from her position as Abram's wife (Inglis), she, immediately on perceiving her condition, became insolent (cf. Prov. xxx. 23).

Ver. 5.—**And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee.** 'Αδικοῦμαι ἐκ σοῦ (LXX.); *inique agis contra me* (Vulgate); My injury is upon thee, *i. e.* thou art the cause of it (Jonathan, Rosenmüller, Ainsworth, Clarke, 'Speaker's Commentary'); or, it belongs to thee as well as to me (Clericus, Bush, Alford); or, perhaps better, May the injury done to me return upon thee! cf.

xxvii. 13 (Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Wordsworth)—the language of passionate irritation, indicating repentance of her previous action and a desire to both impute its guilt to, and lay its bitter consequences on, her husband, who in the entire transaction was more innocent than she. **I have given my maid into thy bosom** (very imprudent, even had it not been sinful; the result was only what might have been expected);—**and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee** (cf. 1 Sam. xxiv. 15; Judges xi. 27). An irreverent use of the Divine name on the part of Sarai (Calvin), and a speech arguing great passion (Ainsworth).

Ver. 6.—**But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand** (regarding her still as one of Sarai's servants, though elevated to the rank of secondary wife to himself); **do to her as it pleaseth thee.** Literally, *the good in thine eyes;* in which conduct of the patriarch may be seen perhaps (1) an evidence of his peaceful disposition in doing violence to his feelings as a husband in order to restore harmony to his disquieted household (Calvin), and (2) a proof that he had already found out his mistake in expecting the promised seed through Hagar (Calvin); but also (3) an indication of weakness in yielding to Sarai's passionate invective (Willet, Bush), and (4) an unjustifiable wrong inflicted on the future mother of his child (Candlish). **And when Sarai dealt hardly with her**—(literally, *afflicted her*, by thrusting her back into the condition of a slave (Lange, Candlish); though probably by stripes or maltreatment of some sort in addition (Ainsworth, Bush)—**she fled from her face.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 3.—*Crooked ways, or marrying with Hagar.* I. THE SPECIOUS PROPOSAL. 1. The *author* of it; Sarai, the wife of Abram, a daughter of the faith, the mistress of a household. To the first, the suggestion referred to in the narrative should have been impossible; in the second, it was inconsistent; while, proceeding from the third, it was calculated to be harmful. 2. The *wickedness* of it. It was (1) a clear violation of the law of God (cf. ch. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 16; Ephes. v. 28, 31); (2) a direct offence against the soul of Abram, being in reality the placing of a dangerous temptation in his way (Deut. xiii. 6; Rom. xiv. 13); and (3) an unjustifiable invasion of the liberties of Hagar. Though permitted in the providence of God to be a bondmaid in the house of Sarai, she was not in the power of her mistress to be disposed of in the way proposed, without consent either asked or obtained. 3. The *extenuations* of it. (1) The practice was common. Secondary wives being then in vogue, the scheme recommended by Sarai may not have been regarded by her as sinful. (2) The motive was good. It had its origin undoubtedly in a firm belief in the promise, and a strong desire that her husband should no longer be debarred from its realisation through her apparently permanent sterility. (3) The self-denial was great. The entire conduct of Sarai, in giving Hagar to her husband, evinced certain truly engaging features in her personal and wifely character, which must not be overlooked in forming an estimate of her peculiar action; such as genuine humility in yielding to another the honour of being the mother of Abram's seed, and intense devotion to her husband in submitting for his sake to a displacement which must have carried anguish to her breast.

II. THE SINFUL COMPLIANCE. "Abram hearkened unto the voice of Sarai." 1. *Deliberately.* He was not surprised into this secondary marriage with the Egyptian maiden. The scheme of Sarai appears to have been talked over between them; and if at first he had scruples in complying with her proposition, they were eventually overcome. 2. *Inconsiderately.* That is, the ulterior consequences were not taken into account in assenting to this device for the anticipation of the promised seed; only its immediate feasibility and superficial recommendations. So men are morally short-sighted, and cannot see afar off when confronted by some sweet temptation. Had Abram only dimly discerned the outcome of Sarai's counsel, he would have seen that the thing was not of God. A perception of the coming whirlwind would often hinder the sowing of the wind. 3. *Inexcusably.* Though not dictated by carnal desire, Abram's acquiescence in Sarai's scheme was far from being faultless. It evinced a want of faith, and, indeed, a want of true spiritual discernment in supposing that what God had promised as a gift of grace could be surreptitiously snatched from his Divine hand in the way proposed, or even by any purely human stratagem;

and a want of patience in not calmly waiting for the accomplishment of God's word in God's own time and way.

III. THE SORROWFUL RESULT. 1. *Humiliation to Sarai.* Elated by the prospect of maternity, the young Egyptian slave-girl despised her mistress; by haughtiness of carriage, perhaps silently discovering contempt for Sarai's sterility, and possibly assuming airs of superiority, as if, in consequence of approaching motherhood, anticipating her displacement from the throne of Abram's love (Prov. xxx. 23). 2. *Misery to Abram.* The womanly nature of Sarai, stung to jealousy by the success of her own plan, and incapable of longer enduring the scornful triumph of a maiden whom her own hands had transformed into a favoured rival, with something like vindictive heat turned upon her meek, submissive, and in this matter wholly innocent lord, reproaching him as, if not the cause of her barrenness, at least the patient and half-satisfied witness of her humiliation; she almost called down upon him the judgment of Heaven. To a noble spirit like that of Abram the anguish of Sarai must have been distressing to behold; and the pain which it occasioned must have been intensified when he came to realise the painful dilemma in which he stood between her and Hagar. 3. *Oppression to Hagar.* Reminding Sarai that Hagar, though a wife to him, was still a maid to her, the patriarch unwisely extended sanction to whatever remedy the heated breast of Sarai might devise. The result was that the favoured maiden was at once thrust back into her original condition of servitude, deprived of whatever tokens of honour and affection she had received as Abram's wife, and subjected to injurious treatment at the hands of her incensed mistress and rival, from which she ultimately sought refuge in flight.

Learn—1. That eminent saints may lapse into grievous sins. 2. That a child of God is specially liable to temptation after seasons of high religious privilege. 3. That the strongest temptations sometimes proceed from the least expected quarters. 4. That trying to anticipate the Divine promise is not an uncommon form of temptation. 5. That when God's people take to crooked ways, nothing but evil can come of it.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xvi.—*Hagar.* The history of Hagar has its two sides—that which is turned towards God and illustrates Divine grace, that which is turned towards man and illustrates human infirmity and sinfulness. Jehovah brought forth compassionate bestowments of revelation and promise out of his people's errors. Abram and Sarah both sinned. Hagar sinned. The angel of the Lord, representative of the continuous gracious revelation of Jehovah as a covenant God, appeared in the cloud of family sorrow, drawing once more upon it the rainbow of promise. Until the heir came there was a call for patience. Unbelief appeared at work—in the patriarch's weakness, in Sarah's harshness, in Hagar's pride and rebellion, for she was, as a member of the household, partaker of the covenant. In the wilderness appeared the messenger of grace.

I. THE NAME OF THE LORD WAS THE TESTIMONY. Thou God seest me; or, Thou God of vision. The idea is that the sight of God was deliverance. Hagar's seeing God was God seeing her. The vision was both objective and subjective. So the world has wearied itself in the wilderness of its own ignorance and moral helplessness (cf. Gal. iv. 22—31). The unspiritual, carnal mind is the bond slave, which must give way to the true heir. All true religious life is a response to revelation. In his light we see light.

II. THE REVELATION TO HAGAR MAY BE CONNECTED WITH HER PERSONAL HISTORY. She turned back with a new light in her heart. Submission and obedience are commanded, but abundant reward is promised. Our life is under the eye of Jehovah and in his hand. "Thou God seest me" is the cry of a grateful memory, the note of a bright future. The nearness of God, his knowledge, may be not terror, but blessing, angels round about us, gracious sunshine of love in which we are invited to walk as children of light.—R.

Vers. 1—6.—*The maid, the mistress, and the master.* I. HAGAR'S SINS. 1. Pride. 2. Contempt. 3. Insubordination. 4. Flight.

II. SARAI'S FAULTS. 1. Tempting her husband. 2. Excusing herself. 3. Appealing to God. 4. Afflicting her servant.

III. ABRAM'S INFIRMITY. 1. Yielding to temptation. 2. Perpetrating injustice. 3. Acquiescing in oppression.—W.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 7.—**And the angel of the Lord.** *Maleach Jehovah*, elsewhere styled *Maleach Elohim* (ch. xxi. 17; xxxi. 11); supposed but wrongly to be a creature angel (Augustine, Origen, Jerome, Hofmann, Baumgarten, Tholuck, Delitzsch, Kurtz), for the reasons chiefly (1) that the term angel commonly designates a class of spiritual beings (ch. xix. 1; xxxii. 1; Job iv. 18; Ps. xci. 11; Matt. xiii. 41; John xx. 12, *et passim*); (2) that the ἄγγελος κυρίου of the New Testament (Matt. i. 20; Luke ii. 9; Acts xii. 7) is always a created angel; (3) that the meaning of the term מַלְאָךְ, one sent, from לָאַךְ, to depute (Gesenius), one through whom work is executed, from לְאָךְ, to work (Keil), implies a certain degree of subordination, which is afterwards more distinctly recognised (1 Chron. xxi. 27; Zech. i. 12); (4) that the distinction between the unrevealed and the revealed God was not then developed as in later times, and particularly since the advent of Christ—to every one of which arguments, however, it is comparatively easy to reply (cf. Keil and Lange *in loco*). With more force of reason believed to have been the Divine Being himself, who already as Jehovah had appeared to Abram (the Fathers, the Reformers, Hengstenberg, Keil, Lange, Hävernick, Nitzsch, Ebrard, Steir, Kalisch, Ainsworth, Bush, Wordsworth, Candlish), since—1. The *Maleach Jehovah* explicitly identifies himself with Jehovah (ver. 10) and Elohim (ch. xxii. 12). 2. Those to whom he makes his presence known recognise him as Divine (ch. xvi. 13; xviii. 23—33; xxviii. 16—22; Exod. iii. 6; Judges vi. 15, 20—23; xiii. 22). 3. The Biblical writers constantly speak of him as Divine, calling him Jehovah without the least reserve (ch. xvi. 13; xviii. 1; xxii. 16; Exod. iii. 2; Judges vi. 12). 4. The doctrine here implied of a plurality of persons in the Godhead is in complete accordance with earlier foreshadowings (ch. i. 26; xi. 7) and later revelations of the same truth. 5. The organic unity of Scripture would be broken if it could be proved that the central point in the Old Testament revelation was a creature angel, while that of the New is the incarnation of the God-Man. **Found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness.** Properly an uninhabited district suitable for pasturing flocks, from a root signifying to lead to pasture; hence a sterile, sandy country, like that here referred to, Arabia Deserta, bordering on Egypt (ch. xiv. 6; Exod. iii. 1). **By the fountain.** The article indicating a particular and well-known spring. **In the way to Shur.** "Before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria" (ch. xxv. 18); hence not Pelusium on the Nile (Jos., 'Ant.,' vi. 7, 3), but probably the modern Dschifar in the north-west of Arabia Deserta (Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange). Hagar was clearly directing her flight to Egypt.

Ver. 8.—**And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid.** Declining to recognise her marriage with the patriarch, the angel reminds her of her original position as a bondwoman, from which liberty was not to be obtained by flight, but by manumission. **Whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.** "Her answer testifies to the oppression she had experienced, but also to the voice of her own conscience" (Lange).

Ver. 9.—**And the angel of the Lord said unto her**—as Paul afterwards practically said to Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon (*vide* Phil. 12)—**return to thy mistress, and submit thyself**—the verb here employed is the same as that which the historian uses to describe Sarah's conduct towards her (ver. 6); its meaning obviously is that she should meekly resign herself to the ungracious and oppressive treatment of her mistress—**under her hands.**

Ver. 10.—**And the angel of the Lord said unto her** (after duty, promise), **I will multiply thy seed exceedingly** (literally, *multiplying I will multiply thy seed;* language altogether inappropriate in the lips of a creature), **that** (literally, *and*) **it shall not be numbered for multitude.**

Ver. 11.—**And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael.** "God shall hear," or, "Whom God hears," the first instance of the naming of a child before its birth (cf. afterwards ch. xvii. 19; 1 Kings xiii. 2; 1 Chron. xxii. 9; Matt. i. 21; Luke i. 13). **Because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.** Τῇ ταπεινώσει σου (LXX.), "thy prayer" (Chaldee), of which there is no mention, though men's miseries are said to cry when men themselves are mute (Calvin; cf. Exod. i. 24; iii. 7).

Ver. 12.—**And he will be a wild man.** Literally, *a wild ass* (*of a*) *man;* the פֶּרֶא,

onager, being so called from its swiftness of foot (cf. Job xxxix. 5—8), and aptly depicting "the Bedouin's boundless love of freedom as he rides about in the desert, spear in hand, upon his camel or his horse, hardy, frugal, revelling in the varied beauty of nature, and despising town life in every form" (Keil). As Ishmael and his offspring are here called "wild ass men," so Israel is designated by the prophet "sheep men" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 38). **His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.** Exemplified in the turbulent and lawless character of the Bedouin Arabs and Saracens for upwards of thirty centuries. "The Bedouins are the outlaws among the nations. Plunder is legitimate gain, and daring robbery is praised as valour" (Kalisch). **And he shall dwell in the presence of**—literally, *before the face of*, i. e. to the east of (Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Tuch, Knobel, Delitzsch); or, "everywhere before the eyes of" (Kalisch, Wordsworth); or, independently of (Calvin, Keil, Lange, Murphy) —**all his brethren.** The Arabs of to-day are "just as they were described by the spirit of prophecy nearly 4000 years ago" (Porter's 'Giant Cities of Bashan,' pp. 28, 31, 324).

Ver. 13.—**And she called the name**—not invoked the name (Chaldee, Lapide), though occasionally קָרָא שֵׁם has the same import as קָרָא בְשֵׁם (*vide* Deut. xxxii. 3)—**of the Lord**—*Jehovah*, thus identifying the *Maleach Jehovah* with Jehovah himself—**that spake unto her, Thou God seest me.** Literally, *Thou* (art) El-Roi, *a God of seeing*, meaning either the God of my vision, *i. e.* the God who revealest thyself in vision (Gesenius, Fürst, Le Clerc, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy), or, though less correctly, the God who sees all things, and therefore me (LXX., Vulgate, Calvin, Ainsworth, Candlish, Hofmann, Baumgarten, Delitzsch, Wordsworth). **For she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?** Literally, *Have I also hitherto seen?* i. e. Do I also still live after the vision? (Onkelos, Gesenius, Fürst, Keil, Kalisch, Rosenmüller, Murphy).

Ver. 14.—**Wherefore the well was called**—in all likelihood first by Hagar—**Beer-lahai-roi**, or the well of him that liveth and seeth me (A. V.); but either (1) the well of the living one of vision, *i. e.* of God, who appeared there (Onkelos, Rosenmüller, Lange) or (2) the well of the life of vision, *i. e.* where after seeing God life was preserved (Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy), or where in consequence of seeing God a new life was imparted (Inglis). **Behold, it is between Kadesh** (*vide* ch. xiv. 7) **and Bered.** Of uncertain situation; but the well has probably been discovered in *Ain Kades* (called by the Arabs *Moilahi Hagar*), to the south of Beersheba, and about twelve miles from Kadesh (cf. Keil *in loco*).

Ver. 15.—**And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name**—a peculiarity of the Elohist to assign the naming of a child to the father (Knobel); but the present chapter is usually ascribed to the Jehovist, while the instances in which the name is given by the mother do not always occur in Jehovistic sections (cf. ch. xxx. 6, which Tuch imputes to the Elohist)—**which Hagar bare, Ishmael**—thus acknowledging the truth of Hagar's vision.

Ver. 16.—**And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 7.—*The capture of the runaway, or Hagar and the angel of the Lord.* I. THE FUGITIVE ARRESTED. 1. *The agent of her capture.* The angel of Jehovah (*vide* Exposition), whose appearance to Hagar at this particular juncture was doubtless—(1) *Unexpected.* Those who flee from duty seldom anticipate the encountering of God in their career (Jonah i. 3). (2) *Instantaneous.* The Invisible Supreme, who ever compasses our paths, only requires to either open his creatures' eyes, or veil his uncreated glory in a finite form, to make his presence known (Ps. cxxxix. 7; Luke xxiv. 15). (3) *Familiar.* Though here mentioned, angelic visitation need not now have occurred for the first time. Hagar probably had learnt something in the patriarch's household of the character, existence, and form of this celestial visitant. (4) *Opportune.* Whether regarded in this light or not, the present Divine manifestation to Hagar was highly seasonable, as God's visits to men ever are, in both the world and the Church. 2. *The place of her capture.* (1) *In the wilderness*, a very different locality from Abram's tent. But all regions are equally accessible to God's providence and grace; and God's angel of mercy and salvation can find his way to disconsolate wanderers across the wilderness of a barren world as easily as to eminent saints within the sacred precincts of the Church. (2) *On the way to Shur*, i. e. going back to Egyptian worldliness and idolatry. Her chances of reaching the land

of Ham were indeed small, considering her bodily condition; but thither was her destination, and hence her arrestment by the angel of the Lord was a special mercy. So Divine grace interposes to prevent those who have been once enlightened from relapsing to their old natural condition of worldliness and sin. (3) *By a fountain of water*, beside which it may be imagined she had cast herself in sheer exhaustion; an emblem of those springs of refreshment, or wells of Baca, which God has provided for the spiritually disconsolate, and one of which was being opened by Jehovah's visit for the comfort of the unhappy bondmaid.

II. THE FOUNDLING INTERROGATED. 1. *The question of the angel.* (1) The designations used, Hagar, Sarai's maid, reveal the minuteness of the Divine knowledge. God is acquainted with the names and the homes, the conditions in life, and the constituent elements in the history of all men (Ps. cxxxix. 1—5). (2) The reference to Hagar's original condition of servitude implies disapprobation of her union with Abram. No transaction can be safely passed as blameless until it has been reviewed and judged by God. (3) The inquiries addressed to Hagar were designed to convict her of sin. Whence had she come? From Abram's house, where the name of God was worshipped; from the presence of Sarai, who had a lawful claim upon her service; from the land of Canaan, the inheritance of Abram's seed, of which, as she fondly hoped, she was about to become the mother—in all which she was clearly committing wrong. Then whither was she going? Back again to Egypt, as the ultimate goal of her flight, while in the mean time she was exposing herself and her unborn child to serious peril. Doubtless these and other considerations of a similar sort arose within the breast of Hagar as she listened to Jehovah's questionings. When God examines souls they are truly, minutely, and completely searched. 2. *The answer of Hagar.* (1) Promptly given. There was no sign of hesitancy or reluctance. The utmost frankness and cordiality should characterise a sinner's dealings with God. (2) Briefly expressed. "She was fleeing from the face of Sarai her mistress." Comprehensive brevity should signalise our responses to God's interrogations. (3) Honestly declared. She had run away. If it was wrong, she made no attempt at concealment. Guileless acknowledgment of sin is a true mark of contrition.

III. THE WANDERER DIRECTED. 1. *To return to Abram's house.* The tent of Sarai, though to Hagar's quick Southron blood a place of humiliation, was nevertheless for her the true place of safety, both physically and spiritually. The first counsel that God's word and spirit give to those who flee from duty, forsake the company of saints, and venture out upon perilous and sinful courses is "to stand in the ways, and ask for the old paths" (Jer. vi. 16). 2. *To submit to Sarai's yoke.* Her alliance with the patriarch could not in God's sight alter her original position as a slave. Though soon to be the mother of Abram's seed, she was still a bondwoman, whose duty was submission, however galling to her hot blood, and however unreasonable it might seem in the case of one whose child might yet inherit Canaan. God's people are required to abide in those stations in life in which they have been called, until they can be honourably released from them (1 Cor. vii. 20—22), and to endure those afflictions which God in his providence may impose, rather than impetuously and sinfully endeavour to escape from them (Matt. xvi. 24).

IV. THE DISCONSOLATE COMFORTED. 1. The richness of the offered consolation. (1) *A gracious assurance*—that she was an object of the Divine regard, as this very visit proved; of the Divine observation, since the Lord knew her condition; and of the Divine compassion, for already he had heard her affliction—than which no sweeter consolation can be offered to either penitent backslider or dejected sufferer. (2) *A comfortable promise*—that she should live to be the mother of Abram's seed, that her unborn babe should be a son, and that her son should develop into a bold, courageous, and prosperous man, and that through him she herself, an Egyptian slave-girl, should become the ancestress of a numerous and mighty people. God is able, even in respect of material and temporal benefits, to compensate for life's sorrows and tribulations, and to make up in one direction for what he takes away in another. (3) *An important instruction*—to name her child "Ishmael" when it should be born; partly as a memorial to herself of the Divine mercy, and partly as a reminder to her child of the sure Source of prosperity, both personal and national,

temporal and spiritual. God's people should remember the right hand of the Most High (Ps. lxxvii. 10), and seek advancement from him alone (Ps. lxxv. 6, 7). 2. The efficacy of the offered consolation. (1) *Adoring gratitude.* Hagar was amazed at the Divine condescension in permitting her to see God and yet live—a mercy denied to Moses on the mount (Exod. xxxiii. 20); and the Divine grace which had imparted life and hope to her soul through this celestial visitation. (2) *Mercy remembered.* Hagar called the well Beer-lahai-roi, *i. e.* the well of seeing and living. The Divine loving-kindness is worthy of memorials, which also should be written on the tablets of the heart when they cannot be expressed in words or enshrined in deeds. (3) *Cheerful submission.* Hagar returned to Abram's house, submitted to Sarai's hand, and in due time gave birth to Ishmael. The best evidence that grace has comforted the human heart is prompt compliance with the will of God.

See in the angel's appearance to Hagar—1. An adumbration of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. An illustration of God's care of those who are within his Church. 3. An indication of the kind of people that most attract the Divine notice and compassion. 4. A revelation of the tenderness with which he deals with sinners. 5. A proclamation of God's gracious readiness to forgive the erring.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 7.—*Wells in the wilderness.* 1. God provides them for the rest and refreshment of pilgrims. 2. God visits them to meet with weary and afflicted pilgrims. 3. God dispenses from them life and hope to all repenting and believing pilgrims. Compare with the angel of Jehovah and Hagar at the fountain of Shur, Christ and the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well (John iv. 6).—W.

Vers. 7—13.—*Glimpses of the Godhead.* 1. Divine condescension. God visits men as the angel visited Hagar. 2. Divine omniscience. God knows men as the angel knew Hagar. 3. Divine compassion. God pities and comforts men as the angel did Hagar. 4. Divine wisdom. God instructs men as the angel directed Hagar. 5. Divine grace. God pardons and accepts men as the angel did Hagar.—W.

Ver. 8.—*God pleading with wanderers.* "Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" She knew not, cared not. Undisciplined, smarting under effects of her own wilfulness (ver. 4), she thought only of escaping pain—a type of those weary, yet unconverted (cf. Jer. ii. 13; v. 3). But God saw her. The Shepherd sought her (cf. Gen. iii. 9; Luke xv. 9). Though not of the chosen race, and having no claim upon his care, of his own mercy he calls her (cf. Ps. cxlv. 9; Ephes. ii. 4; Titus iii. 5). The angel of the Lord; in ver. 13 called the Lord; the messenger of the covenant (Mal. iii. 1)—sent to carry out the Father's purpose (cf. John iii. 17; Luke iv. 18). The same who speaks in the voice of awakened conscience, that he may give peace (cf. Matt. xi. 28). "Hagar, Sarai's maid," expresses God's full knowledge of her (cf. Exod. xxxiii. 12; John x. 3). The name distinguishes the individual. She a stranger, a slave, a fugitive; yet God's eye upon her; all her life before him (cf. Ps. cxxxix. 1—4). A word for those following their own ways, feeling as if hidden in the multitude. Nothing glaring in their lives; men see nothing to find fault with; will God? (cf. Ps. xciv. 7). He knows thee altogether; thy whole life, the selfishness underlying a fair profession, the unconfessed motives, the little duplicities, the love of worldly things; or it may be thy spiritual pride and self-trusting. He sees thee through. But wilt thou seek to escape the thought of him? For what does he search thee out? Is it not to bring thee to peace? A word of comfort to him who is cast down because of weakness in faith, little progress, want of spirituality. He sees all (cf. Luke xix. 5). Not as man—men see the failures; God sees the battle, the longing desire for better things, the prayers (Ps. xxviii. 1; cxxx. 1), the searching of heart, the sorrow because of failure. Even in the wilderness he is present to help (Gal. vi. 9).

I. "WHENCE CAMEST THOU?" Is the wilderness better than the home thou hast left? (cf. Isa. v. 4). Thou hast left safety and plenty (cf. Num. xxi. 5), impatient of God's discipline. A goodly possession was thine—the place of a child (1 John

iii. 1), the right always to pray (Luke xviii. 1; John xv. 7; Heb. iv. 16; James iv. 2), the promise of guidance (Ps. xxxii. 8; Isa. xxx. 21). For what hast thou given up all this? Is thy present lot better? In deepest love these questions are asked. God pleads by providence (Ps. cxix. 67), by the entering of the word (Ps. cxix. 130; Heb. iv. 12), by the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit.

II. "WHITHER WILT THOU GO?" How many have never really considered. Hast thou renounced thy heavenly portion? God forbid. Then is thy life heavenward? Are thy sins blotted out? Hast thou accepted the free gift of salvation? I am not sure of that. And why not? Is it not that thou hast not cared enough to entertain the question as a practical one? (cf. Ezek. xx. 49; xxxiii. 32). Meanwhile thou art not standing still. The day of grace is passing away (cf. Jer. viii. 20). Still Christ pleads (Rev. iii. 20). But day by day the ear becomes more dull, and the aims and habits of life more hard to change. "Return," was the Lord's word to Hagar. Take again thy place in God's family (cf. Luke xv. 20). Fear not to bear thy cross. There is a welcome and joy in heaven over every returning wanderer.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1.—**And when Abram was ninety years old and nine**—consequently an interval of thirteen years had elapsed since the birth of Ishmael; the long delay on the part of God being probably designed as chastisement for Abram's second nuptials (Calvin), and at least corresponding with Abram's undue haste (Lange)—**the Lord appeared to Abram**—lest he should regard Ishmael's birth as a complete fulfilment of the promise (Menochius), and be satisfied with Hagar's child as the expected seed (Calvin)—**and said to him, I am the Almighty God**—*El Shaddai*, found six times in Genesis and thirty-one times in Job, composed of *El*, God, and *Shaddai;* not a *nomen compositum* (from שֶׁ = אֲשֶׁר and דַּי) signifying *qui sufficiens est* (Aquinas, Symmachus, Theodoret, Saadias, Maimonides, Calvin), but either a *pluralis excellentiæ*, from the singular שַׁד, powerful—root שָׁדַד, to be strong (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Wordsworth), or a singular from the same root with the substantive termination ־ַי, as in חַגַּי, the festal, יְשִׁישַׁי, the old man, סִינַי, the thorn-grown (Keil, Oehler, Lange); descriptive of God as revealing himself violently in his might, hence correctly rendered παντοκράτωρ by the LXX. in Job (Oehler); distinguishing Jehovah, the God of salvation, from Elohim, the God who creates nature so that it is and supports it that it may stand, as "the God who compels nature to do what is contrary to itself, and subdues it to bow and minister to grace" (Delitzsch); characterising Jehovah the covenant God, "as possessing the power to realise his promises, even when the order of nature presented no prospect of their fulfilment, and the powers of nature were insufficient to secure it" (Keil); perhaps, like Elohim and Adonai, one of the world-wide titles of the Most High, since it was known to Balaam (Numb. xxiv. 4, 16), and is constantly used in Job ('Speaker's Commentary'). Said in Exod. vi. 2, 3 to have been the name by which God was known to the patriarchs, it is regarded by the partitionists as characteristic of the Elohist (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, Davidson, Ewald), and accordingly to that writer the present chapter is assigned, and the Jehovah of this verse explained as an alteration of the original Elohist's narrative; but the πρῶτον ψεῦδος of this criticism lurks in the identification of El-Shaddai with Elohim, whereas it is not Elohim, but Jehovah, who reveals himself as El Shaddai not alone in the Pentateuch, but in the historical and prophetical books as well (cf. Ruth i. 20, 21; *vide* Keil's Introduction, pt. i. § 2; div. i. § 25). **Walk before me.** Literally, *set thyself to walk*, as in ch. xiii. 17, *in my presence*, as if conscious of my inspection and solicitous of my approval; not behind me, as if sensible of shortcomings, and desirous to elude observation. The phrase intimates a less exalted piety than the corresponding phrase used of Enoch (v. 24) and Noah (ch. vi. 9). **And be thou perfect.** *Tamim*, ἄμεμπτος (LXX.), used of Noah in ch. vi. 9, and rendered τέλειος (LXX.), while perhaps retrospectively glancing at Abram's sin in marrying Hagar, indicates that absolute standard of moral attainment, viz., completeness of being in respect of purity, which the supreme Lawgiver sets before his intelligent creatures (cf. Matt. v. 8).

Ver. 2.—**And I will make my covenant between me and thee.** Literally, *I will give* (cf. ch. ix. 9, 11, 12). Neither an additional covenant to that described in ch. xv. (Rosenmüller), nor a different traditional account of the transaction contained in ch. xv. (Tuch, Bleek), nor the original Elohistic narrative of which that in ch. xv. was a later imitation (Knobel); but an intimation

that the covenant already concluded was about to be carried into execution, and the promise of a son to be more specifically determined as the offspring of Sarai (Keil). **And will multiply thee exceedingly** (*vide* ch. xii. 2; xiii. 16; xv. 5).

Ver. 3.—**And Abram fell on his face**—in reverential awe and worship (*vide* ver. 17; cf. ch. xxiv. 52; Numb. xvi. 22; Mark xiv. 35). Other attitudes of devotion are mentioned (1 Kings viii. 54; Mark xi. 25; 1 Tim. ii. 8). **And God**—*Elohim*, the third name for the Deity within the compass of as many verses, thus indicating identity of being—**talked with him, saying**—

Ver. 4.—**As for me.** Literally, *I*, standing alone at the beginning of the sentence by way of emphasis (cf. 2 Kings x. 29; Ps. xi. 4; xlvi. 5; *vide* Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 309). Equivalent to "So far as I am concerned," or, "I for my part," or, "So far as relates to me." **Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be** — literally, *shalt become* (cf. ch. ii. 7), or grow to (cf. ch. ix. 15)—**a father of many** (or of a multitude of) **nations.**

Ver. 5.—**Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram,**—Ab-ram, *i. e.* high father (*vide* ch. xi. 26); **but Abraham**—Ab-raham (in Arabic signifying a multitude); hence "the father of a multitude," as the next clause explains—**for a father of many** (or a multitude of) **nations have I made thee.**

Ver. 6.—**And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee,**—a promise fulfilled in the Ishmaelites, the descendants of Keturah, the Edomites, and the Israelites—**and kings** (*e. g.* David and Solomon) **shall come out of thee.**

Ver. 7.—**And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant,**—literally, *for a covenant of eternity* (*vide* ch. ix. 16)—**to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.** Literally, *to be for Elohim;* a formula comprehending all saving benefits; a clear indication of the spiritual character of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. ch. xxvi. 24; xxviii. 13; Heb. xi. 16).

Ver. 8.—**And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger,**—literally, *of thy sojournings* (ch. xii. 9; Acts vii. 5; Heb. xi. 9)—**all the land of Canaan** (*vide* ch. x. 19),—**for an everlasting possession.** Literally, *for a possession of eternity;* i. e. the earthly Canaan should be retained by them so long as the arrangement then instituted should continue, provided always they complied with the conditions of the covenant; and the heavenly Canaan should be the inheritance of Abraham's spiritual children for ever (*vide* ch. ix. 16; xiii. 15). **And I will be their God.** Literally, *to them for Elohim* (*vide supra*).

Ver. 9.—**And God said unto Abraham, Thou**—literally, *and thou*, the other party to the covenant, the antithesis to *I* (ver. 4)—**shalt keep my covenant**—literally, *my covenant thou shalt keep*—**therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.**

Ver. 10.—**This is my covenant** (*i. e.* the sign of it, as in ch. ix. 12), **which ye shall keep** (*i. e.* observe to do), **between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.** Literally, *circumcise among* (or *of*) *you every male*, the inf. abs. הִמּוֹל, when it stands abruptly at the commencement of a sentence, having the force of a command (cf. Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 328; Gesenius, 'Grammar,' § 130).

Ver. 11.—**And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin.** עָרְלָה, ἀκροβυστία, *membrum præputiatum*, from עָרַל, to be naked, bare, hence to be odious, unclean, impure, was regarded afterwards as unclean (Deut. x. 16; Isa. lii. 3; Jer. iv. 4), and is here directed to be deprived of the skin covering its extremity, not because through it sin first discovered its effects (Poole), and original corruption is still transmitted (Lapide, Augustine), or to promote cleanliness (Philo), or to express detestation of certain idolatrous rites which were paid to it by the Egyptians and other heathen nations (Lyra, Kalisch), but (1) as a sign of the faith that Christ should be descended from him (Lapide); (2) as a symbolic representation of the putting away of the filth of the flesh and of sin in general (Calvin). Hence it served a variety of uses: (1) to distinguish the seed of Abraham from the Gentiles, (2) to perpetuate the memory of Jehovah's covenant, (3) to foster in the nation the hope of the Messiah, (4) to remind them of the duty of cultivating moral purity (Deut. x. 16), (5) to preach to them the gospel of a righteousness by faith (Rom. iv. 11), (6) to suggest the idea of a holy or a spiritual seed of Abram (Rom. ii. 29), and (7) to foreshadow the Christian rite of baptism (Col. ii. 11, 12). **And it shall be a token of the covenant**—literally, *for a token of covenant* (cf. ch. ix. 12; Acts vii. 8; Rom. iv. 11)—**betwixt me and you.**

Ver. 12.—**And he that is eight days old**—literally, *and the son of eight days* (cf. ch. xvii. 1)—**shall be circumcised among you** (Levit. xii. 3; Luke ii. 21; Phil. iii. 5), **every man child**—"The fact that several times the circumcision of the males only is enjoined may point to the legislator's intention to exclude that rite in the other sex, though it was customary among many

ancient nations, but not universal among the Egyptians" (Kalisch). Though not administered to both, the symbol was ordained for the sake of both sexes (Calvin)—**in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.** Not only a proof of the Divine benignity to Abraham in embracing all the members of his household within the pale of the visible Church now constituted, but likewise a hint of the world-wide aspect of the Abrahamic covenant, a first-fruits as it were of the "all the families of the earth" that should be blessed in Abram.

Ver. 13.—**He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised.** Literally, *circumcised, must be circumcised,* he that is born, &c., the niph. inf. abs. with the finite verb occupying the place of emphasis at the beginning of the sentence (*vide* Gesenius, 'Grammar,' § 131). **And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.**

Ver. 14. —**And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people.** *Ἐξολοθρευθήσεται ἐκ τοῦ γένους αὐτῆς* (LXX.), *i. e.* shall be destroyed from amongst his nation, from among his people (Levit. xvii. 4, 10; Numb. xv. 30), from Israel (Exod. xii. 15; Numb. xix. 13), from the congregation of Israel (Exod. xii. 19), by the infliction of death at the hands of the congregation, the civil magistrate, or of God (Abarbanel, Gesenius, Clericus, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Keil, Wordsworth, Alford); or shall be excommunicated from the Church, and no longer reckoned among the people of God (Augustine, Vatablus, Piscator, Willet, Calvin, Knobel, Murphy, Kalisch, Inglis). That excision from one's people was in certain cases followed by the death penalty (Exod. xxxi. 14; Levit. xviii. 29; Numb. xv. 30) does not prove that the capital infliction was an invariable accompaniment of such sentence (*vide* Exod. xii. 19; Levit. vii. 20, 21; Numb. xix. 13). Besides, to suppose that such was its meaning here necessitates the restriction of the punishment to adults, whereas with the alternative signification no such restriction requires to be imposed on the statute. The uncircumcised Hebrew, whether child or adult, forfeited his standing in the congregation, *i. e.* ceased to be a member of the Hebrew Church. **He hath broken my covenant.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*The covenant renewed.* I. THE COVENANT CONFIRMED. 1. *The time.* "When Abram was ninety years old and nine," *i. e.* thirteen years after Ishmael's birth. Mark the penalty of striving to anticipate Divine promises. Human ingenuity, even when not directly sinful, can only retard, not accelerate, Jehovah's purpose. 2. *The Author.* "El Shaddai," *i. e.* the Being who, though ordinarily operating silently and invisibly in nature, is able to break through nature in order to accomplish his designs. Nature is not superior to God, but *vice versâ*—the Almighty transcends his own handiwork; and much as Nature discloses of God's eternal power and Godhead in her ordinary workings, she does not by means of these reveal the infinite fulness of his Divine resources. 3. *The condition.* "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," *i. e.* follow holiness as well as trust my word. Though grace is the prime mover in all Heaven's bargains or contracts with sinful men, they are invariably conditioned by man's obedience to and trust in the Divine Covenanter. The meaning briefly is, that if God's grace does not conquer man's unbelief and sin, man's unbelief and sin will ultimately cancel God's grace.

II. THE COVENANT EXPLAINED. 1. *The promise of a seed.* An old promise recapitulated, since God gives "line upon line," "precept upon precept" (Isa. xxviii. 10); with little additional clearness of definition, beyond the hint, conveyed by the words "nations" and "kings," that something more than Ishmael and his descendants was to be expected, since the Revealer of the Father (the Word of Jehovah, Christ, the Word of God) only discovers truth to the human mind as it can bear (Mark iv. 33). 2. *The promise of a land.* This too was an old promise redelivered, with the old particularity of description and the old solemnity of donation; partly to inform the hearer's mind, partly to allay whatever anxious thoughts might remain, but chiefly to prepare for the imposition of the obligations that were about to be declared. Covenant mercies, at least in God's contracts, always go before covenant duties. 3. *The promise of a blessing.* This too had been included in the gracious provisions of the covenant from the first; but now a slight advance is made in the elucidation of its nature. The blessing is to be distinctly spiritual. Jehovah is to be a God to

Abram and his seed. Hence the inference which Paul draws (Gal. iii. 14—18) was designed to be deduced by the patriarch—that the true and proper recipients of the covenanted mercies were not to be his natural, but spiritual descendants. See the prominence in respect of clearness of revelation which God assigns to things spiritual.

III. THE COVENANT ATTESTED. 1. The imposition of a new name. (1) Its *significance.* Instead of high-father, a personal appellation descriptive of the elevation of his rank as a chieftain, or of his character as a man, he was henceforth to be styled father of a multitude, a federal or representative designation, defining his relation to both his natural and spiritual descendants. It were well if names always were thus suggestive and symbolic; but only names assigned by God, directly or indirectly, can be relied on as expressive of reality. (2) Its *intention.* This was to indicate that God's covenant was made not with Abram the Chaldæan chieftain, but with Abraham the believer. It was thus a symbol of the new position before God which Abraham occupied, and the new nature which as a believer in God Abraham possessed; *i. e.* of Abraham's justification and regeneration. It was also a reminder that God's covenant was made not with the offspring of Abram as a man, *i. e.* with his natural descendants, except, indeed, provisionally and typically; but with the children of Abraham the believer, *i. e.* with his spiritual posterity, all of whom, like himself, must have new names, *i. e.* occupy new positions and possess new natures, in other words, be justified and regenerated children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. 2. The attachment of a new sign. (1) Its *nature.* Circumcision. On the origin of the rite of circumcision see Exposition. (2) Its *import.* As regarding the grand blessing of the covenant, the promise of a seed, it was designed for a sign that that seed was to be not a child of the flesh, but a child of the promise; not the offspring of nature, but the gift of grace. Hence it served as an adumbration of the sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an intimation of the holy character of his seed. Then, as administered to the patriarch, it was intended as a practical declaration of his faith in the coming seed, and a symbolic representation of his personal devotement to holiness. In every one of these respects its place has been supplied by the Christian rite of baptism, with only this difference, that baptism is a visible token of faith not in a coming, but a crucified and risen, Saviour. (3) Its *incidence.* The ceremony was appointed to be administered first to Abraham, and then to all his household, including Ishmael and his male domestics, and subsequently to all his posterity through the promised son. So the obligations of the covenant rest on all within the Church, and descend from age to age upon believers.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*God's call to believers.* "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." In what sense are we to take this? None can keep God's law perfectly (Rom. vii. 23). And why at this point in Abram's history the emphatic "I am?" &c. The character of his life was faith (cf. Heb. xi. 6) resting on the promises made him (Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 16; xv. 5). The last of these was a special instance of faith. But the triumph was followed by a fall—impatience, would not wait God's time (cf. Ps. xxvii. 14; xxxi. 15). An instance of a common fault —partial faith (cf. Matt. iv. 4; xiv. 28—31). The result was disappointment. Thirteen years passed. Must we not connect this with his fault? Want of faith delayed the blessing (cf. Num. xiv. 33). Then came the word of the Lord—a gentle rebuke (cf. Matt. viii. 26), and a precept: "Walk before me," &c. Return to thy first faith; let it be perfect, not partial (cf. Prov. iii. 5; Matt. xvii. 20).

I. A LESSON FOR BELIEVERS. Watch lest faith grow cold. Some like not to retain God in their thoughts. They hide themselves from him amid the vanities of the world. But his people, who have known his love (1 John iii. 1), why should they ever shrink from opening their whole heart to him? Yet, imperceptibly perhaps, there is a change. The faith is held, but the sunshine is gone. The desire to tell all to God is not there. Why? The man has set his heart upon something, and cannot trust God's love; or he is drawn to something he cannot approve, and listens to

what can be said for it (cf. Rom. xiv. 4); or he has fallen into self-sufficiency. Then reserve towards God. The hidden life becomes disordered. No longer the desire that he should know all and guide all. And thus uneasiness, reserve, distance. Then follow plans to quiet the uneasiness—business, ceremony, theology, or work in some other direction. But no real communion with God in all this.

II. The remedy. "Walk before me." Recognise the evil. Believe the cause. Be not faithless. Bear in mind God's presence (cf. Ps. lxii. 1—7). Seek not to hide from him, or to justify self. And "be perfect," *i. e.* matured; not in any high or strange attainment, but in that which a child may learn—in trusting God's truth and love; in bringing thoughts, wants, and wishes before him. Towards this active obedience and following Christ are means; and, above all, sincerity, and a real definite dedication of the life to God.

III. Encouragement. "I am the Almighty God"—all-powerful (Isa. lix. 1; Luke i. 37) and all-loving (Ps. xxxvii. 5; Rom. viii. 32). This, really believed, would remove anxious care. What is it that leads thee to seek another way? The consciousness of having wandered. Has he not made provision for this? (1 Tim. i. 15; 1 John ii. 1). Or is it that the blessing long desired is not given? Some power, some opportunity for God's work, and still the door is closed; or it may be some spiritual gift, some token of growth in grace, and still the evil of thy nature is unsubdued. Be patient (James i. 4). Thy Father in heaven will not fail thee (Rom. vi. 14). Walk before him. Tell him all that is in thy mind. In his time thou shalt find peace (Phil. iv. 6; 1 John v. 4; Rev. xxi. 7).—M

Vers. 1, 2.—*The true life of faith set forth.* I. Commencing with gracious appearance of God to his creature. 1. The revelation one in a continued series of *progressive manifestations.* 2. Accompanied with direct *promise,* which in the form of covenant appeals to reciprocal fellowship and confidence. 3. Embracing both present and future blessedness. The blessing upon the earthly lot, as preparatory to the higher blessedness, a foundation on which the higher life is built up.

II. The method of the life of faith. Walk before me; be perfect, &c. 1. Constant *reference to God*—his will, his truth, his covenant. 2. *Distinction* from the world. Abram the pilgrim. Walk among the heathen, and yet before me. The consciousness of a chosen aim a great preservative. The sustaining favour of God. Development of the Divine in the human. 3. A life which is worked out as a *trust for others.* The representative man holds a special position towards God not for his own sake alone, but as the depositary of the blessing. Great help to walk before God and be perfect, that we are called to be the channel through which blessings flow. Confirmation of the covenant will be sent to us in the way, when there is lack of promise in appearances, notwithstanding the evidence of our own infirmity. We walk in the light towards a future which shall abundantly reward patient continuance in well doing.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 15.—**And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife,**—who, not having hitherto been mentioned in any of the promises, is now expressly taken into covenant, and accordingly receives a new name (cf. ver. 5; ch. xxxii. 28; Rev. iii. 12)—**thou shalt not call her name Sarai,**—"my princess" (Gesenius); "princely, noble" (Ikenius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Delitzsch); "the heroine" (Knobel); "strife, contention" (Ewald, Murphy), with special reference to her struggle against sterility (Kalisch)—**but Sarah**—"princess" (Gesenius), the meaning being that, whereas formerly she was Abram's princess only, she was henceforth to be recognised as a princess generally, *i. e.* as the mother of the Church (Jerome, Augustine), or as princess to the Lord, the letter *h* being taken from the name Jehovah, as in the change of Abram into Abraham (the Rabbis); though Ikenius and Rosenmüller derive from an Arabic root, *sara,* to have a numerous progeny—shall **her name** be.

Ver. 16.—**And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her** (the first intimation that the promised seed was to be Sarai's child), **and she shall be a mother of nations;** —literally, *she shall become nations* (cf. ver. 4)—**kings of people shall be of her.**

Ver. 17.—**Then Abraham fell upon his face** (*vide* ver. 3), **and laughed.** וַיִּצְחָק, from

צחק, to laugh. Cf. καχάζω καγχάζω, *cachinnor*, German, *kichern; καὶ ἐγέλασε* (LXX.); rejoiced (Onkelos); marvelled (Jerome, Targums); laughed for joy (Arabic version, Augustine, Calvin, Delitzsch, Keil, Murphy, *et alii*); not a smile of incredulity (Jerome, Chrysostom) or of diffidence (Kalisch), as partitionists assert in order to produce a contradiction between the Elohist and Jehovist of ch. xv. **And said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is** (literally, *to the son of*) **an hundred years old?** A suggestion of natural reason which was overruled by faith (Calvin, Wordsworth), though better regarded as the exclamation of holy wonder, or as an illustration of believing not for joy (Inglis; cf. Luke xxiv. 41). **And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?** Yes. What reason declared impossible was possible to faith. "He considered not the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. iv. 19).

Ver. 18.—**And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!** Not implying that Abram was content with Hagar's child as the promised seed without waiting for Sarai's son (Jerome, Calvin, Kalisch); scarcely that he feared lest God might remove Ishmael by death now that Isaac had been promised (Wordsworth); but probably that he desired that Ishmael might not only live and prosper (Bush), but share with Sarah's son in the blessings of the covenant (Keil, Lange, Rosenmüller, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis).

Ver. 19.—**And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac.** "Laughter," or "he laughs" (the third person future (*yitsak*) being frequently employed in personal designations; cf. Jacob, Jair, Jabin, &c.), with obvious reference to Abraham's laughter (*vide* ver. 17). Cf. on naming before birth ch. xvi. 11. **And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.**

Ver. 20—**And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee** (meaning, also, "and will grant thy prayer;" an allusion to the significance of the name Ishmael, "God hears"): **Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget** (*vide* ch. xxv. 12—16), **and I will make him a great nation.**

Ver. 21.—**But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year** (cf. ch. xxi. 2).

Ver. 22.—**And he** (*i. e.* God) **left off talking with him** (Abraham), **and God went up**—into heaven (*vide* ch. xxxv. 13)—**from Abraham.**

Ver. 23.—**And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day.** Literally, *in the bone of that day*, an expression occurring in ch. vii. 13, which is commonly regarded as Jehovistic, while this is Elohistic; though Quarry suggests that the ensuing section should commence with this verse, in which case the present paragraph would also be Jehovistic, and the appearance of unnecessary repetition in its statements avoided by viewing them as the customary recapitulations that mark the opening of a new division of the history (*vide* 'Genesis,' p. 440); against which, however, is the name of God which continues to be here employed. **As God** (Elohim) **had said unto him.**

Ver. 24.—**And Abraham was ninety years old and nine,**—literally, *a son of ninety years and nine* (cf. ch. vii. 6; xvi. 16)—**when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.**

Ver. 25.—**And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old** (the same form of expression as above), **when he was circumcised.** Hence among the Arabs the ceremony is usually delayed till the thirteenth year (cf. Josephus, 'Ant.,' i. 13).

Vers. 26, 27.—**In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.** The usual charges of needless repetition which are preferred against the closing verses of this chapter may be disposed of by observing that ver. 23 intimates that the sacrament of circumcision was administered to the patriarch and his household on the very day that God had enjoined it, *i. e.* without delay; that vers. 24, 25 declare the respective ages of Abraham and Ishmael when they received the Divinely-appointed rite; and that vers. 26, 27 state the fact that the entire household of the patriarch was circumcised simultaneously with himself.

THE ORIGIN OF CIRCUMCISION. The determination of this question does not appear of paramount importance, yet the ascertained results may be briefly indicated. (1) According to Herodotus (ii. 104) circumcision was observed as a custom of primitive antiquity among the Colchians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians, by the last of whom it was communicated to the Syrians of Palestine and the Phœnicians. It is, however, uncertain whether among the Egyptians the practice was universal, as Philo and Herodotus assert, or limited to the priesthood, as Origen believed; and equally doubtful whether the Egyptians themselves may not have adopted it from the Hebrews in the time of Joseph,

instead of from the Ethiopians, as appears to be the judgment of Kalisch. Against the idea that circumcision was a national and universal observance among the Egyptians in the time of Abraham, it has been urged that the male servants of the patriarch, some of whom were Egyptians (ch. xii. 16), were not circumcised till Abraham was commanded to perform the rite; that Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian mother, remained uncircumcised till the same time; and that the daughter of Pharaoh recognised Moses as a Hebrew child, which, it is supposed, she could not have done had circumcision been generally practised among her own people. On the other hand, it is contended that the absence of details as to how the rite should be performed seems to imply that already circumcision was familiar to Abraham; and by some modern Egyptologists it is asserted that an examination of ancient mummies and sculptures, in which circumcision is a distinctive mark between the Egyptians and their enemies, shows that the ceremony must have been in use not among the priests only, but throughout the nation generally so early as the time of the fourth dynasty, *i. e.* 2400 B.C., or considerably earlier than the time of Abraham. Still (2) though it should be held as indubitably established that circumcision was a prevalent custom among the Egyptians in the time of Abraham, it would not follow that the Hebrews adopted it from them. On the contrary, the Biblical narrative expressly mentions that its observance by the patriarch and his household was due to a Divine command, and was connected with a religious significance which was altogether foreign to the Egyptians and others by whom that rite was practised. Among the reasons for its adoption by the heathen nations of antiquity have been assigned, among the Ethiopians, a prophylactic design to ward off certain painful, and often incurable, disorders; among the Egyptians, a regard to cleanliness; and perhaps among the priesthood of the latter country a semi-religious idea (the deification of the generative powers) was associated with a practice which was commonly regarded as enhancing productivity; but the import of the ceremony as enjoined upon the father of the faithful was as widely as possible removed from every one of these ideas, being connected with spiritual conceptions of which the heathen world was entirely ignorant. That a heathen custom should have been adopted by Jehovah and elevated to the rank and connected with the spiritual significance of a religious sign will not occur as a difficulty to those who remember that the rainbow, a well-known natural phenomenon, was selected as the sign for Noah's covenant, and that Christian baptism is a similar transformation of a previously existing ceremony by which Gentile proselytes were admitted to the Hebrew Church.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 15—27.—*The covenant completed.* I. THE ADMISSION OF SARAI. 1. *The changed name.* As on entering within the covenant the name of Abram was changed to Abraham, so, to signalise the reception of his spouse, Sarai was transformed into Sarah (vide Exposition), the transformation having in her case the same significance as it had in Abraham's. In particular it proclaimed that, like Abraham, Sarah was now a justified and regenerated believer in the Divine promise. *N.B.* There is only one gate of entrance to Christ's Church, viz., faith or conversion. 2. *The guaranteed blessing.* What is here affirmed of Sarai is that she should not only be received into the Church, but made a sharer of Abraham's blessing, *i. e.* become entitled to all the gracious provisions of the covenant. The blessing of Abraham belongs to all who are possessed of Abraham's faith. Christ's salvation is the common property of believers. And to all it is certain, as it was to Sarai. The "yea" concerning Sarai has now become for Christ's people "yea and amen." 3. *The promised son.* This was the first intimation that Sarai was to be the mother of the seed. The Eternal never hastens. God's disclosures of his own plans are ever slow, gradual, progressive, and mostly regulated by the faith of the recipients. When the fulness of the time arrives he is able to be minute, explicit, emphatic, as he was in intimating Isaac's birth: (1) by the time—a year hence, and (2) by the name—Isaac. 4. *The rejoicing husband.* The laugh of gladness which escaped the patriarch, though partly owing

to the reiterated promise of a son, was chiefly due to the announcement that Sarah was to be its mother. It was the joy of a husband in the happiness of a beloved wife, long tried, but at length about to be rewarded; it was also the joy of a believing husband in the well-founded assurance of his wife's interest in the covenant of grace.

II. THE EXCLUSION OF ISHMAEL. 1. The prayer of Abraham—(1) *Reveals a note of sorrow.* The displacement of Hagar's child by the son of Sarah, though for Sarah's sake thrilling him with joy, appears to have raised a tender sympathy in his breast for the disappointment which was to fall upon the lad and his mother. For years he had himself no other thought than that Ishmael might be the seed, and now he cannot put aside the cherished hope without regret. Let fathers learn that though it is beautiful to feel for children's griefs, it is dangerous to construct plans for children's greatness. (2) *Breathes an earnest spirit.* Deeply concerned for the welfare of his son, Abraham was also filled with longing that God would listen to his prayer. If there is anything about which a parent's heart should be sincerely passionate, it is the happiness and prosperity of his offspring; and if there is one season more than another in which a parent's heart should be possessed by strong emotion, it is when pleading for his children at a throne of grace (Ps. lxxviii. 2). (3) *Craves a heavenly blessing.* Though Ishmael was to be denied the honour of serving as a medium for the transmission of the blessings of the covenant to future ages, his father supplicated for him a personal participation in those blessings. The chief ambition of a parent should be the conversion and spiritual advancement of his children (3 John 4). 2. The answer of God—(1) *Assures the praying father of acceptance.* Ishmael, though not admitted to the succession of the holy seed, should not be excluded from the gifts of grace. If Hagar's child, though born of the flesh, should become possessed of faith, he too would share in the spiritual benediction of the covenant. Let parents be encouraged to pray for their children. (2) *Promises great temporal prosperity to the son.* Abraham had sought spiritual life for Ishmael; God bestowed in addition temporal renown. So God did with Solomon (1 Kings iii. 11), and still does with saints (Ephes. iii. 20).

III. THE ACQUIESCENCE OF ABRAHAM. This was signified by the patriarch's observance of the rite of circumcision, in regard to which his obedience was—1. *Immediate.* There was no delay, no reluctance, no considering the question, but instantaneous compliance with the Divine directions. On the self-same day as God explained to him the provisions and conditions of the covenant, he declared his consent before God by the acceptance of the suggested sign. His behaviour in this respect should be taken as a model by believers. 2. *Cheerful.* The rite of circumcision was of course attended with pain and something approaching to personal humiliation, and yet self-abasement and suffering were joyously assented to in view of the coming gift of the covenant. So should Christians delightedly accept tribulation and any sort of bodily indignity that God may impose, considering them as nothing in comparison with the eternal weight of glory. 3. *Thorough-going.* Prompt as to its time, willing in its spirit, the obedience of Abraham was also minute in its performance. The appointed ordinance was administered to himself, his son Ishmael, and every male domestic in his house, as God had said unto him. So God's people are required to observe all things written in the book of the covenant.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 15.—"Thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be," &c. "Mother of nations;" "kings of peoples shall be of her."

I. EXALTATION OF THE LOWLY. A pilgrim and stranger, made a princess. A mother of nations, though once desolate, mourning, ready to murmur. The lamentation turned into laughter.

II. THE FREEDOM OF DIVINE GRACE. The blessing unexpected, apart from creature strength, notwithstanding blind and foolish attempts to obtain blessing in our own way—the Ishmael, not the Isaac. Though many things "*said in our heart,*" the one thing Divinely purposed the only true fulfilment of that heart's desire.

III. FOREGLEAMS OF THE COMING GLORY. The seed of the woman, specially representing the promise of God, supernaturally given, coming as the royal seed, son of a

princess and forerunner of kings of peoples. God-given heir, God-given inheritance. The birth of the child of promise, so manifestly Divine, points to the yet greater glory: "Unto us a Son is born."—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1.—And the Lord—*Jehovah*, the Divine name employed throughout the present and succeeding chapters, which are accordingly assigned to the Jehovist (Tuch, Bleek, Davidson, Colenso), with the exception of ch. xix. 29, which is commonly regarded as a fragment of the original Elohist's narration (*vide infra*)—**appeared unto him.** The absence of Abraham's name has been thought to favour the idea that the present chapter should have begun at ch. xvii. 23 (Quarry). That the time of this renewed Divine manifestation was shortly after the incidents recorded in the preceding chapter is apparent, as also that its object was the reassurance of the patriarch concerning the birth of Isaac. **In the plains of Mamre.** Literally, *in the oaks of Mamre* (*vide* ch. xiii. 18). **And he sat in the tent door.** Literally, *in the opening of the tent*, a fold of which was fastened to a post near by to admit any air that might be stirring. **In the heat of the day.** *I. e.* noontide (cf. 1 Sam. xi. 11), as the cool of the day, or the wind of the day (ch. iii. 8), means eventide. "The usual term for noon is *Tsoharim* (ch. xliii. 16), that is, the time of 'double or greatest light,' while a more poetical expression is 'the height of the day' (Prov. iv. 18), either because then the sun has reached its most exalted position, or because it appears to stand still in the zenith" (Kalisch). Among the Orientals the hour of noon is the time of rest (cf. Cant. i. 7) and the time of dinner (ch. xliii. 16, 25). In this case the patriarch had probably dined and was resting after dinner, since, on the arrival of his visitors, preparations had to be commenced for their entertainment.

Ver. 2.—**And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.** Not in addition to (Kalisch), but including (Keil), Jehovah, whose appearance to the patriarch, having in the previous verse been first generally stated, is now minutely described. That these three men were not manifestations of the three persons of the Godhead (Justin Martyr, Ambrose, Cyril), but Jehovah accompanied by two created angels (Keil, *et alii*), may be inferred from ch. xix. 1. When first perceived by the patriarch they were believed to be men, strangers, who were approaching his tent, and indeed were already close to it, or standing by him. **And when he saw them** (*i. e.* understood that one of them was Jehovah, Jarchi rightly explaining that the word translated above "looked," *i. e.* with the bodily vision, now implies an act of mental perception), **he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.** The expression denotes the complete prostration of the body by first falling on the knees, and then inclining the head forwards till it touches the ground. As this was a mode of salutation practised by Orientals towards superiors generally, such as kings and princes (2 Sam. ix. 8), but also towards equals (ch. xxiii. 7; xxxiii. 6, 7; xlii. 6; xliii. 26), as well as towards the Deity (ch. xxii. 5; 1 Sam. i. 3), it is impossible to affirm with certainty (Keil, Lange) that an act of worship was intended by the patriarch, and not simply the presentation of human and civil honour (Calvin). If Heb. xiii. 2 inclines to countenance the latter interpretation, the language in which Abraham immediately addresses one of the three men almost leads to the conclusion that already the patriarch had recognised Jehovah.

Ver. 3.—**And said, My Lord**—Adonāi, literally, Lord, as in ch. xv. 2, *q. v.* (LXX., κύριε; Vulgate, *Domine;* Syriac, Onkelos, Kalisch, Alford, Lange), though the term may have indicated nothing more than Abraham's recognition of the superior authority of the Being addressed (Murphy). The readings Adoni, my Lord (A. V., Dathius, Rosenmüller), and Adonăi, my lords (Gesenius), are incorrect—**if now I have found favour in thy sight**—not implying dubiety on Abraham's part as to his acceptance before God (Knobel), but rather postulating his already conscious enjoyment of the Divine favour as the ground of the request about to be preferred (Delitzsch, Lange). Those who regard Abraham as unconscious of the Divinity of him to whom he spake see in his language nothing but the customary formula of Oriental address (Rosenmüller; cf. ch. xxx. 27; 1 Sam. xx. 29; Esther vii. 3)—**pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.** The hospitality of the Eastern, and even of the Arab, has been frequently remarked by travellers. Volney describes the Arab as dining at his tent door in order to invite passers-by ('Trav.,' i. p. 314). "The virtue of hospitality is one of the great redeeming virtues in the character of the Bedouins"

(Kalisch). "Whenever our path led us near an encampment, as was frequently the case, we always found some active sheikh or venerable patriarch sitting 'in his tent door,' and as soon as we were within hail we heard the earnest words of welcome and invitation which the Old Testament Scriptures had rendered long ago familiar to us: 'Stay, my lord, stay. Pass not on till thou hast eaten bread, and rested under thy servant's tent. Alight and remain until thy servant kills a kid and prepares a feast'" (Porter's 'Giant Cities of Bashan,' p. 326; cf. *ibid.* p. 87).

Ver. 4.—**Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet.** Feet washing was a necessary part of Oriental hospitality (cf. ch. xix. 2; xxiv. 32; xliii. 24). "Among the ancient Egyptians the basins kept in the houses of the rich for this purpose were sometimes of gold" (Freeman, Bible Manners, 'Homiletic Quarterly,' vol. i. p. 78). "In India it is considered a necessary part of hospitality to wash the feet and ankles of the weary traveller, and even in Palestine this interesting custom is not extinct. Dr. Robinson and party on arriving at Ramleh repaired to the abode of a wealthy Arab, where the ceremony was performed in the genuine style of ancient Oriental hospitality" (*vide* Kitto's 'Bible Illustrations,' vol. i. p. 230). **And rest yourselves** (literally, *recline* by resting on the elbow) **under the tree.**

Ver. 5.—**And I will fetch a morsel of bread,**—a modest description of what proved a sumptuous repast (*vide* vers. 6, 8)—**and comfort ye your hearts;**—literally, *strengthen* or support them, *i. e.* by eating and drinking (Judges xix. 5; 1 Kings xxi. 7)—**after that ye shall pass on: for therefore**—כִּי־עַל־כֵּן introduces the ground of what has already been stated, something like *quando quidem*, forasmuch as (Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 353), since, or because (Kalisch), and not = עַל־כֵּן כִּי, for this cause that (Gesenius, 'Gram.,' § 155), or "because for this purpose" (Keil)—**are ye come to** (literally, *have ye passed before*) **thy servant.** The patriarch's meaning is not that they had come with the design of receiving his gifts (LXX., A. V.), but either that, unconsciously to them, God had ordered their journey so as to give him this opportunity (Calvin, Bush, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Keil), or perhaps simply that since they had passed by his tent they should suffer him to accord them entertainment (Kalisch, Rosenmüller). **And they said, So do, as thou hast said.** Therefore we must believe that Abraham washed the men's feet, and they did eat (ver. 8). Here is a mystery (Wordsworth).

Ver. 6.—**And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures**—Hebrew, three seahs, a seah being a third of an ephah, and containing 374 cubic inches each (Keil); a third of a bushel (Kalisch)—**of fine meal,**—literally, *of flour, fine flour;* σεμίδαλις (LXX.); the first term when alone denoting flour of ordinary quality (cf. Levit. ii. 1; v. 11; Num. vii. 13)—**knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth**—*i. e.* "round unleavened cakes baked upon hot stones" (Keil).

Ver. 7.—**And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good,**—the greatness of the honour done to the strangers was evinced by the personal activity of the patriarch, and the offering of animal food, which was not a common article of consumption among Orientals—**and gave it unto a young man;**—*i. e.* the servant in attendance (cf. ch. xiv. 24)—**and he hasted to dress it.**

Ver. 8.—**And he took butter,**—חֶמְאָה, from the root חמא, to curdle or become thick, signifies curdled milk, not butter (βούτυρον, LXX.; *butyrum*, Vulgate), which was not used among Orientals except medicinally. The word occurs seven times in Scripture with four letters (Deut. xxxii. 14; Judges v. 25; 2 Sam. xvii. 29; Isa. vii. 15, 22; Prov. xxx. 33; Job xx. 17), and once without א (Job xxix. 6; *vide* Michaelis, 'Supplement,' p. 807)—**and milk,**—חָלָב, milk whilst still fresh, or containing its fatness, from a root signifying to be fat (cf. ch. xlix. 12; Prov. xxvii. 27)—**and the calf which he**—*i. e.* the young man—**had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree,**—a custom still observed among the Arabs, who honour their guests not by sitting to eat with, but by standing to wait upon, them—**and they did eat.** Not seemed to eat (Josephus, Philo, Jonathan), nor simply ate after an allegorical fashion, as fire consumes the materials put into it (Justin Martyr), but did so in reality (Tertullian, Delitzsch, Keil, Kurtz, Lange). Though the angel who appeared to Manoah (Judges xiii. 16) refused to partake of food, the risen Saviour ate with his disciples (Luke xxiv. 43). Physiologically inexplicable, this latter action on the part of Christ was not a mere φαινόμενον or simulation, but a veritable manducation of material food, to which Christ appealed in confirmation of the reality of his resurrection; and the acceptance of Abraham's hospitality on the part of Jehovah and his angels may in like manner have been designed to prove that their visit to his tent at Mamre was not a dream or a vision, but a genuine external manifestation.

Ver. 9.—**And they said unto him** (*i. e.* the Principal One of the three, speaking for the others, interrogated Abraham during the

progress, or perhaps at the close of, the meal saying), **Where is Sarah thy wife?** (thus indicating that their visit had a special reference to her). **And he said, Behold, in the tent.** It is obvious that if at first Abraham regarded his visitors only as men, by this time a suspicion of their true character must have begun to dawn upon his mind. How should ordinary travellers be aware of his wife's name? and why should they do so unusual a thing, according to Oriental manners, as to inquire after her? If thus far their behaviour could not fail to surprise the patriarch, what must have been his astonishment at the subsequent communication?

Ver. 10.—**And he said** (the Principal Guest, as above, who, by the very nature and terms of his announcement, identifies himself with Jehovah), **I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life.** Literally, *at the time reviving;* i. e. when the year shall have been renewed, in the next year, or rather spring (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 337; Rosenmüller, Drusius, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Ainsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'); though other interpretations of the phrase have been suggested, as, *e. g.*, "according to the time of that which is born," *i. e.* at the end of nine months (Willet, Calvin, Bush, Murphy). **And, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.** *I. e.* at the time specified. **And Sarah heard** it **in the tent door, which** was **behind him.**

Ver. 11.—**Now Abraham and Sarah** were **old and well stricken in age.** Literally, *gone into days,* i. e. into years. This was the first natural impediment to the accomplishment of Jehovah's promise; the second was peculiar to Sarah. **And it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women** (*vide* Levit. xv. 19, 25).

Ver. 12.—**Therefore** (literally, *and*) **Sarah laughed within herself**—Abraham had laughed in joyful amazement (ch. xvii. 17) at the first mention of Sarah's son; Sarah laughs, if not in unbelief (Calvin, Keil, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Wordsworth), at least with a mingled feeling of doubt and delight (Lange, Murphy) at the announcement of her approaching maternity—**saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?**—literally, *and my lord,* i. e. my husband, is *old.* The reverential submission to Abraham which Sarah here displays is in the New Testament commended as a pattern to Christian wives (1 Pet. iii. 6).

Ver. 13.—**And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh,**—a question which must have convinced Abraham of the Speaker's omniscience. Not only had he heard the silent, inaudible, inward cachination of Sarah's spirit, but he knew the tenor of her thoughts, and the purport of her dubitations—**saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which** (literally, *and I*) **am old?** Sarah's mental cogitations clearly showed that the temporary obscuration of her faith proceeded from a strong realisation of the weakness of nature, which made conception and pregnancy impossible to one like her, who was advanced in years; and accordingly her attention, as well as that of her husband, was directed to the Divine omnipotence as the all-sufficient guarantee for the accomplishment of the promise.

Ver. 14.—**Is any thing too hard for the Lord?** Literally, *Is any word too wonderful, i. e.* impossible, for Jehovah? μὴ ἀδυνατήσει παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ ῥῆμα (LXX.), with which may be compared Luke i. 37. **At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life** (*vide supra,* ver. 10), **and Sarah shall have a son.**

Ver. 15.—**Then Sarah** (who had overheard the conversation, and the charge preferred against her, and who probably now appeared before the stranger) **denied, saying, I laughed not.** Sarah's conduct will admit of no other explanation than that which the sacred narrative itself gives. **For she was afraid.** The knowledge that her secret thoughts had been deciphered must have kindled in her breast the suspicion that her visitor was none other than Jehovah. With this a sense of guilt would immediately assail her conscience for having cherished even a moment any doubt of the Divine word. In the consequent confusion of soul she tries what ever seems to be the first impulse of detected transgressions, viz., deception (cf. ch. iii. 12, 13). **And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.** With a directness similar to that which he employed in dealing with the first culprits in the garden, not contending in a multiplicity of words, but solemnly announcing that what she said was false. The silence of Sarah was an evidence of her conviction; her subsequent conception was a proof of her repentance and forgiveness.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—15.—*Noontide at Mamre, or angels' visits.* I. THE ARRIVAL OF THE STRANGERS. 1. *The appearance they presented.* Seemingly three men, they were in reality three angels, or, more correctly, Jehovah accompanied by two celestial attendants, who, at an unexpected moment, were making for Abraham's tent. So are the homes of saints ofttimes visited by angels unawares (Heb. i. 14), and, greater honour

still, by him who claims the angels as his ministers (Ps. viii. 4; Isa. lvii. 17). 2. *The reception they obtained.* Immediately that Abraham discerned their approach, he hastened to accord them most respectful and courteous salutation, in true Oriental fashion, falling on his knees and bowing till his head touched the ground; an illustration of that beautiful politeness towards one's fellow-men (if as yet he only regarded his visitors as men), or of that reverential self-abasement before God (if already he had recognised the superior dignity of the principal figure of the three) which ought especially to characterise God's believing and covenanted people (see Ps. xcv. 6; 1 Pet. iii. 8). 3. *The invitation they received.* Probably oppressed by the sultry beams of the noonday sun, if not otherwise travel-stained and weary, they were, with genuine Arab-like hospitality, entreated by the patriarch to avail themselves of such refreshment and repose as his cool-shaded, well-furnished tent might be able to afford. And this invitation of the patriarch was—(1) *Humbly proffered*, as if their acceptance of it would be more an act of grace conferred on him than a benefit enjoyed by themselves. (2) *Modestly described*, as if it were only a trifle after all that he was asking them to accept, while all the time his liberal heart was devising liberal things. (3) *Piously enforced*, by the consideration that he recognised in their arrival at his tent a special call to the discharge of the duty of hospitality. (4) *Promptly accepted*, without apologies or deprecations of any sort, but with the same generous simplicity as it was offered. "So do as thou hast said."

II. THE ENTERTAINMENT OF THE STRANGERS. In the banquet which Abraham extemporised for his celestial guests beneath the umbrageous oak at Mamre were three things which should be studied by all who would use hospitality. 1. *Joyous alacrity.* That the patriarch's invitation was no mere conventional remark which was meant to pass unheeded by those to whom it was addressed was proved by the expeditious cordiality with which he set about the preparations needed for the proffered repast, enlisting Sarah's practised hands in baking cakes, and commissioning a trusty servant of the house to kill and dress a young and tender calf selected by himself from the flocks. Here was no reluctance or half-heartedness with Abraham in the work of kindness to which Providence had called him. So ought Christians to manifest a spirit of cheerfulness and a habit of promptitude in doing good (Rom. xii. 8, 13; 2 Cor. ix. 7). 2. *Unstinted liberality.* Modestly characterised as a little repast, it was in reality a sumptuous banquet which was set before the strangers. Abraham entertained his guests with princely munificence. The modern virtue of stinginess, or niggardliness, supposed by many to be a Christian grace, had not been acquired by the patriarch, and should with as much speed as possible be unlearned by Christ's disciples. Hospitality towards the saints and beneficence towards all men, but especially towards the poor, should be practised with diligence, and even with a holy prodigality, by all who are of Abraham's seed (Luke xiv. 12—14; Rom. xii. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. xiii. 2). 3. *Personal activity.* Though the master of a large household, with 300 trained domestics, and the noble Eliezer at their head, the patriarch does not think of relegating the important work of preparing the entertainment to his subordinates, but himself attends to its immediate execution. Indeed, in all the bustling activity which forthwith pervades the tent his figure is always and everywhere conspicuous. And when the meal is ready he reverently serves it with his own hand; again a true pattern of humility, as if he had caught up by anticipation the spirit of our Saviour's words (Matt. xx. 26); and a true preacher of Christian duty, saying that in God's work personal service is ever better than labouring by proxy.

III. THE COMMUNICATION OF THE STRANGERS. The noonday meal over, or perhaps while it was advancing, the principal of the three guests, who certainly by this time was recognised as Jehovah, made an important announcement to the patriarch, which, however, was specially intended for Sarah, who was listening behind the dark fold of the camel's-hair tent, viz., that next year the promised seed should be born. That announcement was—1. *Authoritatively made.* It was made by him who is the faithful and true Witness, with whom it is impossible to lie, and who is able also to perform that which he has promised. 2. *Unbelievingly received.* The laugh of Sarah was altogether different from that of Abraham (ch. xvii. 17). While Abraham's was the outcome of faith, hers was the fruit of latent doubt and incredulity. There are always two ways of receiving God's promises; the one of which secures, but the

other of which imperils, their fulfilment (Mark ix. 23; xi. 23). 3. *Solemnly confirmed.* (1) By an appeal to the Divine omnipotence. The thing promised was not beyond the resources of Jehovah to accomplish. (2) By a further certification of the event. As it were a second time the Divine faithfulness was pledged for its fulfilment. (3) By an impressive display of miraculous power, first in searching Sarah's heart, and second in arresting Sarah's conscience. The result was that Sarah's unbelief was transformed into faith.

Learn—1. The duty and profit of entertaining strangers (Heb. xiii. 2). 2. The beauty and nobility of Christian hospitality (Rom. xii. 13). 3. The excellence and acceptability of personal service in God's work. 4. The condescension and kindness of God in visiting the sons of men. 5. The admirable grace of Jehovah in repeating and confirming his promises to man. 6. The right way and the wrong way of listening to God's words of grace and truth.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—15.—*The theophany at Mamre.* I. THE DIVINE VISIT TO THE PATRIARCH. 1. A remarkable proof of the Divine condescension. 2. A striking adumbration of the incarnation of Christ. 3. An instructive emblem of God's gracious visits to his saints.

II. THE DIVINE FEAST WITH THE PATRIARCH. 1. The courteous invitation. 2. The sumptuous provision. 3. The ready attention.

III. THE DIVINE MESSAGE FOR THE PATRIARCH. 1. Its delivery to Abraham. 2. Its reception by Sarah. 3. Its authentication by Jehovah.—W.

Vers. 1—15.—*The theophany at Mamre.* "The Lord appeared unto him" (ver. 1). I. THE PREPARATION FOR DIVINE MANIFESTATION. 1. Abraham stands on a higher plane of spiritual life. He is endeavouring to fulfil the commandment given (ch. xvii. 1): "Walk before me," &c. The appearances and communications are more frequent and more full. 2. The concentration of the believer's thought at a particular crisis. His place at the tent door, looking forth over the plains of Mamre, representing his mental attitude, as he dwelt on the promises and gazed into the future. 3. There was a coincidence between the conjuncture in the history of the neighbouring cities and the crisis in the history of the individual believer. So in the purposes of God there is preparation for his manifestation both in external providence and in the events of the world on the one hand, and on the other in the more personal and private history of his people.

II. THE MANIFESTATION ITSELF. 1. It was very *gracious* and *condescending.* The angels did not appear in angelic glory, but in human likeness. They came as guests, and, in the fragrant atmosphere of a genial hospitality, at once quickened confidence and led forward the mind to expect a higher communication. The household activity of Abraham and Sarah on behalf of the three visitors, while it calmed and strengthened, did also give time for thought and observation of the signs of approaching opportunity. 2. There was from the first an *appeal to faith.* Three persons, yet one having the pre-eminence. The reverential feeling of the patriarch called out at the manner of their approach to his tent. The coincidence possibly between the work of the Spirit in the mind of the believer and the bestowment of outward opportunity. 3. The communication of the Divine promise in immediate connection with the facts of human life. The great trial of faith is not the appeal to accept the word of God in its larger aspect as his truth, but the application of it to our own case. We may believe that the promise will be fulfilled, and yet we may not take it to heart. "I will return unto *thee.*" "Sarah shall have a son." The strength made perfect *in* weakness, not merely *for* weakness. The Divine in the Scripture revelation does not overwhelm and absorb the human; the human is taken up into the Divine and glorified. Taking the narrative as a whole, it may be treated—(1) *Historically*—as it holds a place in the history of the man Abraham and in the progressive development of revelation. (2) *Morally*—suggesting lessons of patience, reverence, humility, truthfulness, faith. (3) *Spiritually*—as pointing to the Messiah, intimating the

incarnation, the atonement, the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of the promised Redeemer; the freedom and simplicity of the fellowship of God with man; the great Christian entertainment—man spreading the meal before God, God accepting it, uniting with man in its participation, elevating it into that which is heavenly by his manifested presence.—R.

Ver. 12.—"Sarah laughed within herself." 1. The incongruity between a Divine promise and the sphere of its fulfilment is temptation to unbelief. 2. A disposition to measure the reality and certainty of the Divine by a human or earthly standard is sure to lead us to irreverence and sinful doubt. 3. There may be an inward and concealed working, known to God though not outwardly expressed, which is still both an insult to him and an injury to us. 4. The root of unbelief is in the ground of the soul. Sarah laughed because she was not prepared for the gracious promise. She was afraid of her own thoughts because they were not such as became her, and did dishonour to God's sufficiency and love. "She denied, saying, I laughed not." A more receptive and spiritual mind would have both risen above the incongruity and been incapable of the dissimulation.—R.

Ver. 14.—"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" I. TAKE IT AS THE QUESTION WHICH GOD ASKS OF MAN. 1. *Remonstrance.* The history of Divine manifestations proves that nothing is demanded of faith which is not justified by the bestowments of the past. 2. *Invitation.* We connect the question with the promise. He opens the gate of life; is it too hard for him to give us the victory? "At the time appointed" his word will be fulfilled. He would have us rest on *himself.* "Believe that *he is,* and that he is the *rewarder,*" &c. What he is, what he says, are blended into one in the true faith of his waiting children.

II. TAKE THE QUESTION AS ONE WHICH MEN ASK OF ONE ANOTHER. 1. When they set forth the goodness of Divine truth. The possibility of miracles. The hardness of the world's problems no justification of unbelief. 2. When they proclaim a gospel of supernatural gifts, a salvation not of man, but of God. Why should we doubt conversion? Why should a regenerated, renewed nature be so often mocked at? 3. When they would encourage one another to persevere in Christian enterprise. The methods may be old, but the grace is ever new. The world may laugh, but the true believer should see all things possible. The times are our measures. Eternity is God's.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 16.—**And the men rose up from thence,**—Mamre (*vide supra,* ver. 1)—**and looked towards Sodom.** Literally, *toward the face* (Rosenmüller), or towards the plain (Keil), of Sodom, as if intending to proceed thither. **And Abraham went with them**—across the mountains on the east of Hebron, as far as *Caphar-barucha,* according to tradition, whence a view can be obtained of the Dead Sea—*solitudinem ac terras Sodomæ* (vide Keil, *in loco*)—**to bring them on the way.** Literally, *to send them away,* or accord them a friendly convoy over a portion of their journey.

Ver. 17.—**And the Lord said** (to himself), **Shall I hide from Abraham**—the LXX. interpolate, τοῦ παιδός μου; but, as Philo observes, τοῦ φιλοῦ μου would have been a more appropriate designation for the patriarch (cf. 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 8; James ii. 23)—**that thing which I do.** *I. e.* propose to do, the present being used for the future, where, as in the utterances of God, whose will is equivalent to his deed, the action is regarded by the Speaker as being already as good as finished (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 135; Gesenius, § 126).

Ver. 18.—**Seeing that Abraham shall surely become** (literally, *becoming shall become*) **a great and mighty nation** (cf. ch. xii. 2; xvii. 4—6), **and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?** The import of Jehovah's self-interrogation was, that since Abraham had already been promoted to so distinguished a position, not only was there no sufficient reason why the Divine purpose concerning Sodom should be concealed from him, but, on the contrary, the gracious footing of intimacy which subsisted between himself and his humble friend almost necessitated some sort of friendly communication on the subject, and all the more for the reason next appended.

Ver. 19.—**For I know him, that**—literally, *for I have known* (or chosen, יָדַע being = *dilexi,* as in Amos iii. 2) *him to the end that*

(לְמַעַן conveying the idea of purpose; *vide* Ewald, § 357), the language expressing the idea that Abraham had been the object of Divine foreknowledge and election (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Delitzsch, Keil, Oehler, Kalisch, Lange), although the reading of the text is substantially adopted by many (LXX., Vulgate, Targums, Luther, Calvin, Dathe, *et alii*). The latter interpretation assigns as the reason of the Divine communication the knowledge which Jehovah then possessed of Abraham's piety; the former grounds the Divine resolution on the prior fact that Divine grace had elected him to the high destiny described in the language following. It is generally agreed that this clause connects with ver. 17; Bush regards it as exhibiting the means by which the future promised to Abraham in ver. 18 should be realised—**he will** (rather, *may*) **command his children and his household after him** (by parental authority as well as by personal example), **and they shall keep** (rather, *that they may keep*) **the way of the Lord,**—*i. e.* the religion of Jehovah (cf. Judges ii. 22; 2 Kings xxi. 22; Ps. cxix. 1; Acts xviii. 25), of which the practical outcome is—**to do justice and judgment;**—or righteousness and judgment, that which accords with right or the sense of oughtness in intelligent and moral beings, and that which harmonises with the Divine law (cf. Ezek. xviii. 5)—**that** (literally, *to the end that*, in order that, לְמַעַן, *ut supra*) **the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.**

Ver. 20.—**And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great.** Literally, *the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah* (cf. ch. iv. 10), *because it is* (not, it is indeed, Baumgarten, Keil) *multiplied;* the place of emphasis being conceded to the subject of discourse, viz., the cry of Sodom's wickedness. **And because their sin is very great.** Literally, *and their sin, because it is heavy*, i. e. abundant and heinous.

Ver. 21.—**I will go down now** (cf. ch. xi. 5), **and see** (judicial investigation ever precedes judicial infliction at the Divine tribunal) **whether they have done altogether**—literally, *whether they have made completeness*, i. e. carried their iniquity to perfection, to the highest pitch of wickedness (Calvin, Delitzsch, Keil); or consummated their wickedness, by carrying it to that pitch of fulness which works death (Ainsworth, Kalisch, Rosenmüller). The received rendering, which regards כָּלָה as an adverb, has the authority of Luther and Gesenius—**according to the cry of it, which has come unto me; and if not, I will know.** The LXX. render ἵνα γνῶ, meaning, "should it not be so, I will still go down, that I may ascertain the exact truth;" the Chaldee paraphrases, "and if they repent, I will not exact punishment." The entire verse is anthropomorphic, and designed to express the Divine solicitude that the strictest justice should characterise all his dealings both with men and nations.

Ver. 22.—**And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom** (*i. e.* two of the three proceeded on their way towards the Jordan valley, while the third was detained by the patriarch, probably on the heights overlooking the plain, for a sublime act of intercession which is thus briefly but suggestively described): **but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.** According to the Masorites the text originally read, "And the Lord stood before Abraham," and was changed because it did not seem becoming to speak of God standing in the presence of a creature. This, however, is a mere Rabbinical conceit. As Abraham is not said to have stood before the three men, the expression points to spiritual rather than to local contiguity.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 17.—*Sodom's doom revealed.* I. THE REASON OF THE REVELATION. 1. Abraham's *new position*. Having been lately taken into covenant with God, allied by the holy tie of a celestial friendship to Jehovah, the patriarch seemed in the Lord's eyes to occupy a footing of intimacy before him that demanded the disclosure of Sodom's impending doom. That footing the patriarch no doubt owed to Divine grace—sovereign, unmerited, free; but still, having been accorded to him, it is, by a further act of grace, represented as laying God himself under certain obligations towards his servant. So "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant" (Ps. xxv. 14). 2. Abraham's *new prospects*. About to become the head of a great nation, it was natural to suppose that Abraham would be profoundly interested in all that concerned mankind. As the head of the Old Testament Church too, which had just been constituted (ch. xvii.), there existed a special reason for his being properly instructed as to the impending judgment of Sodom. Upon him would devolve the interpretation to the men of his day of the significance of that event. Rightly viewed, this is one of the proper functions of the Church on

earth—to explain God's judgments to the unbelieving world. Hence "the Lord God doeth nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos iii. 7). 3. Abraham's *new responsibilities*. These were the cultivation of personal and family religion, which devolved upon him with a new force and a heavier degree of obligation than they did before in consequence of his new standing as a Church member. God having graciously assigned this position within the Church in order that he might command his children and his household after him, by means of religious instruction as well as through the influence of personal example, to fear God, it was needful that he should be informed as to the ground, at least, of the coming judgment on the cities of the plain.

II. THE REASON OF THE RETRIBUTION. This was the wickedness of Sodom, which was—1. *Exceedingly heinous as to its character*. Minutely detailed in the ensuing chapter, it is here only indirectly mentioned as something grievous in the sight of God. All sin is inherently offensive in the eyes of the Almighty; but some forms of wickedness are more presumptuously daring or more intrinsically loathsome than others, and of such sort were the sins of Sodom (ch. xix. 1). 2. *Exceedingly abundant as to its measure*. It was "multiplied" iniquity of which the Sodomites were guilty; and this not simply in the sense in which the sins of all may be characterised as beyond computation (Ps. xix. 12; xl. 12), but in the sense that their hearts were set in them to do evil (Eccles. viii. 11), so that they worked all manner of uncleanness with greediness (Ephes. iv. 19). 3. *Exceedingly clear as to its commission*. Though God speaks of making investigation into the sins of Sodom, this was really unnecessary. The moral degeneracy of the inhabitants of the Jordan valley was one of the "all things" that are ever "naked and manifest" unto his eye. So nothing can hide sin from God (2 Chron. xvi. 9; Prov. xv. 3; Amos ix. 8). 4. *Exceedingly patent as to its ill desert*. This was the reason why God employed the language of ver. 21. He meant that though the guilt of Sodom was great, he would not let loose his vengeance until it should be seen to be perfectly just. Nothing would be done in haste, but all with judicial calmness.

Lessons:—1. The impotence of anything but true religion to purify the heart or refine a people. 2. God is specially observant of the wickedness of great cities. 3. When great cities sink to a certain depth in their wickedness they are doomed to perish. 4. When God's judgments overtake a nation they are ever characterised by justice.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 16—33.—*Abraham's intercession for Sodom*. The whole wonderful scene springs out of the theophany. Abraham's faith has given him a special position with the Lord. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" &c. The true priesthood and mediatorship is friendship with God. The grace of God first gives the likeness and then exalts it. The Lord knew Abraham because Abraham knew the Lord. The superior angel, the Lord, remains behind his companions that Abraham might have the opportunity of intercession; so the Lord lingers in his providence that he may reveal his righteousness and mercy. As to the pleading of the patriarch and the answers of the Lord to it, we may take it—

I. As it bears on the CHARACTER OF GOD. 1. He is open to entreaty. 2. He is unwilling to destroy. 3. He spares for the sake of righteousness. 4. He "does right" as "Judge of the earth," even though to the eyes of the best men there is awful mystery in his doings.

II. As it reveals the CHARACTERISTICS OF PATRIARCHAL PIETY. 1. It was bold with the boldness of simplicity and faith. 2. It was full of true humanity while deeply reverential towards God. Abraham was no fanatic. 3. It waited for and humbly accepted Divine judgments and appointments not without reason, not without the exercise of thought and feeling, but all the more so as it prayed and talked with God. 4. The one living principle of the patriarchal religion was that entire confidence in God's righteousness and love, in separating the wicked and the good, in both his judgments and his mercy, which is the essence of Christianity as well. "*The right*" which the Judge of all the earth will do is not the right of mere blind

law, or rough human administration of law, but the right of him who discerneth between the evil and the good, "too wise to err, too good to be unkind."—R.

Ver. 19.—*God's rule in the family.* "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." The promise to Abraham included—(1) understanding of God's acts; (2) that he should become a mighty nation; (3) that he should be ancestor of the promised Seed; (4) that he himself should be a blessing to others. Of these points two at least are not confined to him personally, but belong to all who will. To know what God doeth a man must be taught of the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 14; cf. Isa. vii. 12). There is a wide difference between seeing an event, or even foreseeing it, and understanding God's lessons therein. To be able in everything to mark the love, and care, and wisdom of God; to walk with him as a child, accepting what he sends not merely as inevitable, but as loving; to learn lessons from all that happens, and through the works of his hands to see our Father's face—this is peace, and this is what the wisdom of this world cannot teach (Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 20, 21). Again, Abraham was to be not merely the ancestor of a nation, but the father of a spiritual family by influence and example (Matt. iii. 9; Gal. iii. 7). In this his calling is that of every Christian (Dan. xii. 3; Matt. v. 13, 14). Text connects the godly rule of a family with both these blessings. Christianity is not to be a selfish, but a diffusive thing (Matt. v. 15; xiii. 33); and the influence must needs begin at home (cf. Num. x. 29; Acts i. 8), among those whom God has placed with us.

I. Things needful for this work. 1. *Care for his own soul.* If that is not cared for a man cannot desire the spiritual good of others. He may desire and try to train his children and household in honesty and prudence; to make them good members of society, successful, respected; and may cultivate all kindly feelings; but not till he realises eternity will he really aim at training others for eternity. Might say that only one who has found peace can fully perform this work. A man aroused with desire that his family should be saved. But he cannot press the full truth as it is in Jesus. 2. *Love for the souls of others.* Christians are sometimes so wrapped up in care for their own souls as to have few thoughts for the state of others. Perhaps from a lengthened conflict the mind has been too much turned upon its own state. But this is not the mind of Christ (1 Cor. x. 24). It is not a close following of him. It tells of a halting in the "work of faith" (2 Cor. v. 13, 14; cf. Rom. x. 1). 3. *Desire to advance the kingdom of Christ.* When a man has this he sees in every one a soul for which Christ died (cf. John iv. 35), and those with whom he is closely connected must chiefly call forth this feeling.

II. The manner of the work. Family worship; acknowledgment of God as ruling in the household; his will a regulating principle and bond of union. Let this be a reality, not a form. Let the sacrificial work of Christ be ever put forward in instruction and in prayer. Personal example—constantly aiming at a holy life. To pray in the family and yet to be evidently making no effort to live in the spirit of the prayer is to do positive evil; encouraging the belief that God may be worshipped with words, without deeds; and tending to separate religion from daily life. Prayer in private for each member—children, servants, &c.; and watchfulness to deal with each as God shall give opportunity (Prov. xv. 23). Let prayer always accompany such efforts.—M.

Ver. 19.—*Abraham and family training.* "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him," &c. Under the shady terebinth celestial visitants partake, or appear to do so, of a meal hastily provided by the patriarch. The whole narrative is given in such a way that,—after the manner of the time,—to God are ascribed human passions, desires, hesitancy, and resolve. Hence God is described as resolving, on two grounds, to reveal to Abraham that which he is about to do in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: (1) that he would become a great and mighty nation; (2) that he would direct his household to follow in the ways of righteousness and truth. Notice—

I. The value God places on early spiritual training. Children and servants are both to be brought under spiritual influence. The heart will not become pure

naturally, any more than the boat left to itself would make headway against a strong current. The set of the world-tide is in an evil direction. Abraham had no written book to aid him in his work. His unwritten Bible was the tradition of God's dealings with the race and with himself. He could tell of the promises of God and of the way of approach to him by sacrifice. Evidently there had been careful training in this respect; for when Isaac was going with his father to the mount of sacrifice he noticed that, although the fire and wood were carried, they had no lamb for a burnt offering.

II. God notices how spiritual training is carried on. "I know him." He could trust Abraham, for he would "command," &c., not in the dictatorial tones of a tyrant, but by the power of a consistent life. Many children of religious parents go back to the world because of the imperious style of training they have received. In training, every word, look, and act tells. In many homes there is, alas, no training given and no holy example set. Parents are held accountable for failure, and should therefore be firm and loving in training. They should not readily delegate to others the work of training, either in secular or religious knowledge. Sunday-school teaching should supplement, not supplant, home training.

III. God made the bestowment of intended blessings contingent on the faithful discharge of duty. "That the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." If Abraham had not been faithful his name would have died out, and there would have been no handing on of the narrative of his devoted life and tenacious hold of the Divine promises. Isaac followed in his father's steps and was a meditative man. Jacob cherished the promises and handed them on to his sons. The Jews preserved a knowledge of God when all other races were sunk in polytheism. From them came the One who was the Saviour of the world. All, however, depended on the right training of Isaac. The rill flowed to the streamlet, the streamlet to the creek, the creek to the river, the river to the ocean. Influence ever widened, and God's aim with respect to Abraham was carried out. Let all strive so to act that the character of the life may not undo the teachings of the lip.—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 23.—**And Abraham drew near.** *I. e.* to Jehovah; not simply locally, but also spiritually. The religious use of נִגַּשׁ as a performing religious services to God, or a pious turning of the mind to God, is found in Exod. xxx. 20; Isa. xxix. 13; Jer. xxx. 21; and in a similar sense ἐγγίζω is employed in the New Testament (cf. Heb. iv. 16; x. 22; James iv. 8). The Jonathan Targum explains, "and Abraham prayed." **And said.** Commencing the sublimest act of human intercession of which Scripture preserves a record, being moved thereto, if not by an immediate regard for Lot (Lange), at least by a sense of compassion towards the inhabitants of Sodom, "*communis erga quinque populos misericordia*" (Calvin), which was heightened and intensified by his own previous experience of forgiving grace (Keil). **Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?** The question presupposes that God had, according to the resolution of ver. 17, explained to the patriarch his intention to destroy the cities of the plain. The object the patriarch contemplated in his intercession was not simply the preservation of any godly remnant that might be found within the doomed towns, but the rescue of their entire populations from the impending judgment,—only he does not at first discover his complete design, perhaps regarding such an absolute reversal of the Divine purpose as exceeding the legitimate bounds of creature supplication; but with what might be characterised as holy adroitness he veils his ulterior aim, and commences his petition at a point somewhat removed from that to which he hopes to come. Assuming it as settled that the fair Pentapolis is to be destroyed, he practically asks, with a strange mixture of humility and boldness, if Jehovah has considered that this will involve a sad commingling in one gigantic overthrow of both the righteous and the wicked.

Ver. 24. — **Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city.** A charitable supposition, as the event showed, though at first sight it might not appear so to Abraham; and the bare possibility of Sodom's — not Sodom alone (Kalisch), but the Pentapolis—containing so many good men was enough to afford a basis for the argument which followed. **Wilt thou also destroy and not spare**—literally, *take away* (sc. the iniquity) *i. e.* remove the punishment from — **the place** (not the godly portion of the city merely, but the entire population; a complete discovery of Abraham's design) **for the fifty righteous that are therein?**

Ver. 25.—**That be far from thee**—literally

to profane things (be it) *to thee* = nefas sit tibi = *absit a te!* an exclamation of abhorrence, too feebly rendered by μηδαμῶς (LXX.)—**to do after this manner** (literally, *according to this word*), **to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked** (literally, *and that it should be—as the righteous, so the wicked*), **that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?** The patriarch appeals not to Jehovah's covenant grace (Kurtz), but to his absolute judicial equity (Keil). It does not, however, follow that the Divine righteousness would have been compromised by consigning pious and wicked to the same temporal destruction. This must have been a spectacle not unfrequently observed in Abraham's day as well as ours. Yet the mind of Abraham appears to have been perplexed, as men's minds often are still, by the magnitude of the proposed illustration of a common principle in Providence. Though prepared to admit the principle when its application is confined to solitary cases, or cases of no great amplitude, yet instinctively the human mind feels that there must be a limit to the commingling of the righteous and the wicked in calamity, though it should be only of a temporal description. That limit Abraham conceived, or perhaps feared that others might conceive, would be passed if good and bad in Sodom should be overwhelmed in a common ruin; and in this spirit the closing utterance of his first supplication may be regarded as giving expression to the hope that Jehovah would do nothing that would even seem to tarnish his Divine righteousness. Abraham of course regarded this as impossible, consequently he believed that Sodom might be spared.

Ver. 26.—**And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city** (thus accepting the test proposed by Abraham, but not necessarily thereby acquiescing in the absolute soundness of his logic), **then I will spare** (not as an act of justice, but as an exercise of mercy, and not because of any suspicions that might otherwise attach to my rectitude, but solely in vindication of my clemency) **all the place** (not the righteous merely, which was all that justice could have legitimately demanded) **for their sakes**, *i. e.* because of the claims upon my mercy which grace admits the righteous to prefer.

Ver. 27.—**And Abraham answered and said** (being emboldened by the success of his first petition), **Behold now, I have taken upon me**—literally, *I have begun*, though here perhaps used in a more emphatic sense: I have undertaken or ventured (*vide* Gesenius, p. 326)—**to speak unto the Lord**—Adonai (ch. xv. 2)—**which am but dust and ashes.** "Dust in his origin and ashes in his end" (Delitzsch; *vide* ch. iii. 19).

Ver. 28.—**Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?** Literally, *on account of five*, i. e. because they are wanting. A rare example of holy ingenuity in prayer. Abraham, instead of pleading for the city's safety on account of forty-five, deprecates its destruction on account of five. **And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy** it.

Ver. 29.—**And he spake unto him yet again**—literally, *and he added yet to speak to him* (cf. ch. iv. 2; viii. 10, 12; xxv. 1)—**and said** (increasing in his boldness as God abounded in his grace), **Peradventure there shall be forty found there.** Does Abraham hesitate to add the query, "Wilt thou also?" &c., as if fearing he had at last touched the limit of the Divine condescension. If so, he must have been surprised by the continued gracious response which his supplication received. **And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.**

Ver. 30.—**And he said** unto him, **Oh let not the Lord be angry,**—literally, *let there not be burning with anger to the Lord* (Adonâi)—**and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.**

Ver. 31.—**And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me** (*vide* ver. 27) **to speak unto the Lord** (Adonâi): **Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.**

Ver. 32.—**And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry** (*vide supra*), **and I will speak but this once** (literally, *only this time more*, as in Exod. x. 17): **Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy** it **for ten's sake.**

Ver. 33.—**And the Lord** (Jehovah) **went his way,**—*i. e.* vanished (Keil); not to avoid further entreaties on the part of Abraham (Delitzsch), but for the reason specified in the next words—**as soon as he had left communing with Abraham** (because Abraham's supplications were ended): **and Abraham returned unto his place** (viz., Mamre near Hebron).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 23—33.—*Abraham's intercession.* I. THE OBJECT OF HIS INTERCESSION. Not simply the rescue of Lot from the doomed cities, but the salvation of the cities themselves, with their miserable inhabitants. A request evincing—1. *Tender sympathy.*

Though doubtless the righteous character of the impending retribution had been explained to him, its appalling severity was such as to thrill his feeling heart with anguish, which would certainly not be lessened, but intensified, if he allowed his thoughts to dwell upon the future into which that overwhelming calamity would forthwith launch its unhappy victims. 2. *Unselfish charity*. Not blindly shutting his eyes to the miseries of the Sodomites, as many would have done, on the plea that they were richly merited, or that they were no concern of his, or that it was little he could do to avert them, he actively bestirs himself, if possible, to prevent them. Nor does he say that, having delivered them once from the devouring sword of war, without their having profited by either the judgment or the mercy that had then been measured out to them, he will now leave them to be engulfed by the approaching storm of Almighty wrath; but, on the contrary, he rather seeks a second time to effect their rescue. 3. *Amazing catholicity*. Not content with asking Lot's deliverance, or the rescue of the righteous, he aims at nothing short of the complete preservation of the cities. He solicits not a few of their inhabitants only, but their entire population. One wonders whether to admire most the greatness of the love or the grandeur of the faith herein displayed.

II. THE SPIRIT OF HIS INTERCESSION. 1. *Holy boldness*. Abraham "drew near." The expression intimates confidential familiarity, earnestness of entreaty, unrestrained freedom of discourse, almost venturesome audacity in prayer; all of which characteristics should be found in a believer's prayers, especially when interceding in behalf of others (Heb. x. 22). 2. *Reverent humility*. Three times he deprecates Jehovah's anger, and acknowledges personal unworthiness; and that this self-abasement was not affected, but real, is apparent from the circumstance that the more his supplication prospers, the deeper does he sink in self-prostration. Gracious souls are ever humble under a sense of God's mercies: Jacob (ch. xxxii. 10), David (2 Sam. vii. 18; cf. Luke vii. 6). 3. *Fervent importunity*. With a sanctified dexterity he, as it were, endeavours to shut up the heart of God to grant the deliverance he solicits. Nor does he rest contented with the first response to his entreaty, but with greater vehemence returns to the charge, increasing his demands as God enlarges his concessions (cf. Matt. xv. 22).

III. THE LOGIC OF HIS INTERCESSION. 1. The *argument*. The principle on which the patriarch stands is not the grace of the covenant, but the righteousness of the Judge. His meaning is that in moral goodness there is a certain dynamic force which operates towards the preservation of the wicked, and which the Divine righteousness itself is bound to take into its calculations. Where this force reaches a certain limit in intensity, a regard to judicial equity seems to require that it shall be allowed to exercise its legitimate sway—a principle which God admitted to the patriarch when he said that the Amorites were spared because their iniquity was not full (ch. xv. 16), and which he here endorses by consenting to spare Sodom if even ten righteous men can be found within its gates. 2. The *application*. The patriarch conducts his case with singular directness, going straight to the logical issues of the principle with which he starts; with marvellous ingenuity pitching the hypothetical number of pious Sodomites so high as to insure a favourable response, and gradually diminishing as grace enlarges, and with unwearied assiduity refusing to discontinue his holy argument so long as a chance remains of saving Sodom.

IV. THE SUCCESS OF HIS INTERCESSION. 1. *He got all he asked*. He did not crave the unconditional sparing of the city, but only its preservation on certain suggested conditions. Those conditions too were of his own framing; and yet against them not so much as one single caveat was entered by God. 2. *He ceased asking before God stopped giving*. It may be rash to speculate as to what would have happened had Abraham continued to reduce the number on which he perilled the salvation of Sodom; but for God's glory it is only just to observe that it was not he who discontinued answering the patriarch's petitions, so much as the patriarch himself, who felt that he had reached the limit of that liberty which God accords to believing suppliants at his throne.

Lessons:—1. The liberty which saints have to approach God in prayer. 2. The Divinely-taught art of wrestling with God in prayer. 3. The great encouragement which saints have to pray without ceasing. 4. The profound interest which saints should ever take in the welfare of their fellow-men.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1.—**And there came two angels**—literally, *the two angels*, i. e. the two men of the preceding chapter who accompanied Jehovah to Mamre; *οἱ δύο ἄγγελλοι* (LXX.)—**to Sodom at even** (having left the tent of Abraham shortly after noon); **and Lot**—last heard of in the narrative as captured by the Asiatic kings, and delivered by his uncle (ch. xiv. 12, 16)—**sat in the gate of Sodom.** שַׁעַר, from the idea of opening, signified the gateway or entrance of a camp (Exod. xxxii. 26, 27), of a palace (Esther ii. 19), of a temple (Ezek. viii. 5), of a land (Jer. xv. 7), or of a city (Josh. ii. 7). Corresponding to the ancient forum of the Romans, or agora of the Greeks, the city gate among the Hebrews was the customary place of resort for the settlement of disputes, the transaction of business, or the enjoyment of ordinary social intercourse (cf. ch. xxxiv. 20; Deut. xxi. 19; xxii. 15; Ruth iv. 1; Prov. xxxi. 23). It was probably an arch with deep recesses, in which were placed chairs for the judges or city magistrates, and seats or benches for the citizens who had business to transact. So Homer describes the Trojan elders as sitting at the Scæan gate (iii. 148). In what capacity Lot was sitting in the gate is not narrated. That he was on the outlook for travellers on whom to practise the hospitality he had learned from his uncle (Poole, Calvin, Willet, Lange) is perhaps to form too high an ideal of his piety (Kalisch); while the explanation that he had been promoted to the dignity of one of the city judges, though not perhaps justified as an inference from ver. 9, is not at all unlikely, considering his relationship to Abraham. **And Lot seeing** them (and recognising them to be strangers by their dress and looks) **rose up to meet them**;—having not yet abandoned the practice of hospitality, or forgotten, through mingling with the Sodomites, the respectful courtesy which was due to strangers, since the writer adds—**and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground** (cf. ch. xviii. 2).

Ver. 2.—**And he said, Behold now, my lords**,—*'Adonāi* (vide ch. xviii. 3). As yet Lot only recognised them as men—**turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet** (cf. ch. xviii. 4), **and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways.** Though an act of kindness on the part of Lot, his invitation was not accepted by the angels obviously with a view to try his character (cf. Luke xxiv. 28). **And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.** Literally, *for in the broad open spaces* (i. e. the streets of the town) *we will pass the night;* no great hardship in that climate.

Ver. 3.—**And he pressed upon them greatly.** Being himself sincerely desirous to extend to them hospitality, and knowing well the danger to which they would be exposed from the violence and licentiousness of the townsmen. **And they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast**,—*mishteh*, from *shathah*, to drink, is rightly rendered *πότον* (LXX.), a drink, or refreshing beverage (cf. Esther v. 6; vii. 7)—**and did bake unleavened bread**—literally, *bread of sweetness*, that is, bread not soured by leaven. The banquet was thus of the simplest kind, chiefly, it may be hoped, for the sake of dispatch. **And they did eat.**

Ver. 4.—**But before they lay down, the men of the city**, even **the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.** *I. e.* of the town, as in Jer. li. 31 (Lange); from the extremity, or extremities, of the town (Kalisch); from the extremities, *i. e.* all the population contained within the extremities (Rosenmüller); all the citizens to the last man (Keil). The text probably conveys the writer's idea.

Ver. 5.—**And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night?** Josephus supposes them to have been of beautiful countenances ('Ant.,' i. 11, 3), which excited the lust of the Sodomites, and caused them to assault Lot's house with shameful cries. **Bring them out unto us, that we may know them.** The sin here euphemistically referred to (cf. Judges xix. 22) was exceedingly prevalent among the Canaanites (Levit. xviii. 22) and other heathen nations (Rom. i. 27). Under the law of Moses it was punishable by death.

Vers. 6—8.—**And Lot went out at the door unto them**,—literally, *at the doorway, or opening* (*pethach*, from *pathach*, to open; cf. *pateo*, Latin; *πρόθυρον*, LXX.); in which the gate or hanging door (*dĕlĕth*, from *dalal*, to be pendulous) swings, and which it closes (*vide* Gesenius, p. 201)—**and shut the door** (*deleth*, ut supra; *θύρα*, LXX.) **after him**,—to protect his visitors, which he also sought to accomplish by personal exhortation—**and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly**—and also by an infamous proposal which nothing can extenuate and the utmost charity finds difficult to reconcile with any pretence of piety on the part of Lot. **Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man**;—*i. e.* unmarried

(cf. ch. iv. 1), though, according to some, already betrothed to two Sodomites (ver. 14) —**let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes.** The usual apologies—that in sacrificing his daughters to the Sodomites instead of giving up his guests to their unnatural lust Lot (1) selected the lesser of two sins (Ambrose); (2) thereby protected his guests and discharged the duties of hospitality incumbent on him (Chrysostom); (3) believed his daughters would not be desired by the Sodomites, either because of their well-known betrothal (Rosenmüller), or because of the unnatural lust of the Sodomites (Lange); (4) acted through mental perturbation (Augustine)—are insufficient to excuse the wickedness of one who in attempting to prevent one sin was himself guilty of another (Delitzsch), who in seeking to be a faithful friend forgot to be an affectionate father (Kalisch), and who, though bound to defend his guests at the risk of his own life, was not at liberty to purchase their safety by the sacrifice of his daughters ('Speaker's Commentary'). **Only unto these men**—הָאֵל, an archaic form of הָאֵלֶּה, a proof of the antiquity of the Pentateuch (cf. ver. 25; xxvi. 3, 4; Levit. xviii. 27; Deut. iv. 42; vii. 22; xix. 11)—**do nothing** (*i. e.* offer to them neither violence nor dishonour); **for therefore** (*vide* ch. xviii. 5) **came they under the shadow of my roof**—in order to find protection.

Ver. 9.—**And they said, Stand back.** 'Απόστα ἐκεῖ (LXX.); *recede illuc* (Vulgate); "Make way," *i. e.* for us to enter (Keil, Knobel, Gesenius); Approach hither (Baumgarten, Kalisch); Come near, farther off ('Speaker's Commentary'). **And they said again, This one fellow** (literally, *the one*, an expression of the Sodomites' contempt) **came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge:** —literally, *and shall he judge, judging;* shall he continually play the judge, referring doubtless to Lot's daily remonstrances against their wickedness (cf. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8)—**now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man**, even **Lot** (literally, *upon* Lot, who appears to have offered a sturdy resistance to their violence no less than to their clamours), **and came near to break** (שָׁבַר, to break to pieces, to shiver) **the door.**

Ver. 10.—**But the men** (*i. e.* the angels) **put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door**—*deleth* (*vide* ver. 6).

Ver. 11.—**And they smote the men that were at the door**—the *pethach*, or opening (*vide* ver. 6)—**of the house with blindness,** —סַנְוֵרִים (sanvērim), from an unused quadrilateral signifying to dazzle, is perhaps here intended not for natural blindness, but for confused or bewildered vision, involving for the time being loss of sight, and accompanied by mental aberration; what Aben Ezra calls "blindness of eye and mind" (cf. 2 Kings vi. 18)—**both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door** —which they would hardly have done had it been natural blindness only (Augustine).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—11.—*Warning lights in Sodom.* I. THE FLICKERING LIGHT OF LOT'S PIETY. 1. That the light of Lot's piety was *still burning*, though he had long been subjected to the moral contamination of the licentious Pentapolis, is apparent from—(1) *The practice of hospitality which he appears to have maintained*, having probably learnt it while in his uncle's tent. So men often cling to the outward forms of religion when its living power is ceasing to exert an influence upon the heart; and though adherence to the former is not to be mistaken for the latter, yet it renders the decline of the latter less rapid and disastrous than it would otherwise be. (2) *The kindly reception which he extended to his celestial visitors.* If scarcely so elaborate as the sumptuous entertainment of Abraham at Mamre, the banquet of Lot was at least as outwardly reverential and as unaffectedly sincere and earnest. It clearly testified that Lot had not yet become insensible to the practical duties of religion, as at that time understood. Early religious training is exceedingly difficult to eradicate. (3) *The courageous defence which he made of his threatened guests.* At the risk of his personal safety he endeavoured to repel the violence with which the citizens assailed them; and by the proffer of a sacrifice, the greatest surely that a parent could make, he sought to beguile the infamous designs which the townsmen cherished. Whatever may be said of Lot's conduct in this latter action, his behaviour throughout towards the angels proved that the life of grace within his soul was not quite extinct. 2. That the light of Lot's piety, though still burning, was *fast fading*, may be gathered from the circumstances—(1) *That he had remained so long among the*

Sodomites. Unless a process of moral deterioration had been going on within the soul of Lot, residence among a people so depraved would eventually have become impossible. Instead of being merely vexed in his righteous soul while in Sodom, he would have taken the earliest opportunity to escape from Sodom. (2) *That he had betrothed his daughters to two of Sodom's citizens.* That his prospective sons-in-law were infected by the bad taint of the city may be inferred from their subsequent behaviour, as well as from the preceding judgment of God on the universal corruption of the city's inhabitants. Hence Lot should rather have kept his daughters virgins than have suffered them to enter into matrimonial engagements with ungodly suitors. (3) *That he actually offered to sacrifice his daughters' purity to the lust of the Sodomites.* Whatever apology may be offered for so extraordinary a proposal on the part of Lot, nothing can be plainer than that it implied a strange obliquity of moral vision, and a serious deadening of fine moral feeling. It was a clear proof that the immoral contagion had begun to affect Lot, and that it was high time for him to leave Sodom.

II. THE LURID LIGHT OF SODOM'S IMPIETY. Already well enough known as to its character, the wickedness of Sodom is at length unveiled in all its revolting features and frightful dimensions. The history of that last night in the doomed city proclaimed the sin of Sodom to be—1. *Unnatural.* In the unbridled licence of their appetites they had far outstripped common sinners; even the natural brute beasts they had left behind; they had sunk to a monstrosity of wickedness of which shame forbids to speak. Paul enumerates their sin amongst the forms of impurity by which the heathen world has at times defiled itself (Rom. i. 26, 27). 2. *Shameless.* Disgusting and repulsive as their wickedness was, instead of shrinking into darkness and doing it in secret, they openly proclaimed their filthiness, and would have gratified their lusts in public. It is a lower deep in moral degradation when one not only does "those things which are not convenient," but glories in his shame (Phil. iii. 19). 3. *Violent.* This marked a third degree in the wickedness of Sodom, that, rather than be baulked of their lewd design, the citizens were prepared to set at nought the laws of hospitality, which insured the safety of strangers within their city, and, if need were, the rights of property, by breaking into Lot's house, and, still further, the liberties of the person, by laying hands on the objects of their unhallowed lusts. Ordinary sinners are satisfied if they can gratify an unholy impulse without an undue expenditure of crime; these were ready to trample on all laws of God and man to accomplish their desire, "adding sin to sin" (Isa. xxx. 1). 4. *Obdurate.* Even when struck with blindness they did not discontinue their impious attempt. They wearied themselves groping about in the darkness, but it was still in an endeavour "to find the door." Common sinners pause when confronted with the just judgments of Heaven; these were only maddened into greater fury (Ps. lxxiii. 7). And, to complete the picture, this appalling wickedness was—5. *Universal.* From all quarters and of all ages they clustered and clamoured round the door of Lot's house. There does not seem to have been any dissension in the multitude. They were all of one mind. Could anything more signally attest Sodom's ripeness for destruction?

Learn—1. How rapidly a good man can deteriorate in evil company. 2. How completely a nation can resist the ameliorating influences of its good men. 3. How disgustingly repulsive sin is when fully developed.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 12, 13.—**And the men said unto Lot,**—after the incident recorded in the preceding verses. Lot by this time had doubtless recognised their celestial character; accordingly, the Codex Samaritanus reads "angels"—**Hast thou here any besides?** (*i. e.* any other relatives or friends in the city in addition to the daughters then present in the house) **son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever** (not of things, but of persons) **thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place** (literally, *for destroying this place are we*, i. e. we are here for that purpose), **because the cry of them**—not "the outcry on account of them," *i. e.* which the men of Sodom extort from others (Gesenius), but the cry against them which ascends to heaven, the cry for vengeance on their iniquities (cf. ch. iv. 10; xviii. 20—**is waxen**

great before the face of the Lord (cf. ch. vi. 11; x. 9); **and the Lord** (Jehovah) **hath sent us** (language never employed by the *Maleach Jehovah*) **to destroy it.**

Ver. 14.—**And Lot went out** (obviously that same evening), **and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters,**—literally, *those taking his daughters*, meaning either those who had taken them (LXX., Targums, Knobel, Delitzsch), or more probably those intending to take them, their affianced husbands (Josephus, Vulgate, Clericus, Rosenmüller, Ewald, Keil, Kalisch)—**and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord** (Jehovah) **will destroy this** (literally, *the*) **city. But** (literally, *and*) **he seemed as one that mocked**—as one that made laughter; from the same root as the word Isaac (ch. xvii. 19; cf. Judges xvi. 25)—**unto his sons in law.**

Vers. 15, 16.—**And when the morning arose,**—literally, *as soon as the dawn* (from שָׁחַר, to break forth as the light) *went up*, *i. e.* on the first appearance of the morning twilight—**then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here;**—literally, *which are found;* not implying the existence of other daughters (Knobel), but contrasting with the sons in law (Keil, Kalisch)—**lest thou be consumed in the iniquity** (or punishment, as in Isa. v. 18) **of the city. And while he lingered,**—Lot's irresolution would have been his ruin but for his attendants. His heart manifestly clung to the earthly possessions he was leaving. The angels made no mention of his attempting to save a portion of his greath wealth—**the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful to him:**—literally, *in the mercy*, or gentleness, *of Jehovah to him;* the primary idea of the verb from which the noun is derived being that of softness (cf. Isa. lxiii. 9)—**and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.**

Ver. 17.—**And it came to pass, when they had brought them** (*i. e.* Lot and his family) **forth abroad** (literally, *without;* sc. the city), **that he**—one of the angels (Rabbi Solomon, Jarchi, Rosenmüller, Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary'); the one that had taken Lot's hand (Inglis); Jehovah speaking through the angel (Delitzsch); the angel speaking in the name of God (Keil, Kalisch); Jehovah himself, who, though not mentioned, had now appeared upon the scene (Ainsworth, Candlish)—**said, Escape for thy life** (literally, *for thy soul;* and clearly in this case the loss of the soul in the higher sense must have been involved in the destruction of the life); **look not behind thee.** From the event it may be inferred that this injunction was also given to Lot's wife and daughters; perhaps to hide God's working in the fiery judgment from mortal vision (Knobel), but more likely to express detestation of the abhorred city (Bush), to guard against the incipience of any desire to return (Lange), and to stimulate their zeal to escape destruction. **Neither stay thou in all the plain**—or "circle" (*vide* ch. xiii. 10). Once so attractive for its beauty, it must now be abandoned for its danger. **Escape to the mountain** (the mountain of Moab, on the east of the Dead Sea), **lest thou be consumed.**

Ver. 18.—**And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord.** *Adonai*, which should rather be translated Lord; whence it would almost seem as if Lot knew that his interlocutor was Jehovah. Keil admits that Lot recognised a manifestation of God in the angels, and Lange speaks of a miraculous report of the voice of God coming to him along with the miraculous vision of the angels. That the historian uses "them" instead of "him" only proves that at the time Jehovah was accompanied by the angels, as he had previously been at Mamre (*vide* ch. xviii. 1).

Ver. 19.—**Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight** (cf. ch. xviii. 3), **and thou hast magnified thy mercy** (language inappropriate to be addressed to the angels, though exactly suitable if applied by Lot to Jehovah), **which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil** (more correctly, *the evil*, i. e. the destruction threatened upon Sodom) **take me, and I die.**

Ver. 20.—**Behold now, this city is near to flee unto** (literally, *thither*), **and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.** Lot's meaning was that since Zoar was the smallest of the cities of the Pentapolis, it would not be a great demand on God's mercy to spare it, and it would save him from further exertions for his safety. A singular display of moral obtuseness and indolent selfishness on the part of Lot.

Ver. 21.—**And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee** (literally, *I have lifted up thy face*, the petitioner usually supplicating with his face toward the ground, so that the elevation of his countenance expressed the granting of his request) **concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.**

Ver. 22.—**Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.** *I. e.* "The Little;" obviously from Lot's remark concerning it (ver. 20); Σηγώρ (LXX.). The original name of the city was Bela (ch. xiv. 2, *q. v.*). It has been sought for in the Wady Zuweirah, a pass

leading down from Hebron to the Dead Sea, on the west side of the lake (De Sancey); in the *Ghor-el-Mezraa*, i. e. upon the southern peninsula, which projects a long way into the Dead Sea (Robinson); and in the *Ghor-el-Szaphia*, at the south-eastern end of the sea, at the opening of the *Wady-el-Raumer* (Keil); but has now been identified with Zi'ara, at the northern extremity of the lake (Tristram, 'Land of Moab,' p. 330; *vide infra*, ver. 28, on the site of cities of the plain).

Ver. 23.—**The sun was risen upon the earth**—literally, *the sun went forth*, i. e. it was now above the horizon. Lot had left Sodom with the first streak of dawn; but, having lingered, it was clear morning—**when Lot entered into Zoar**—or "went towards Zoar," *i. e.* when the angel left him (Keil).

Ver. 24.—**Then the Lord rained**—literally, *and Jehovah caused it to rain; καὶ κύριος ἔβρεξε* (LXX.), which latter term is adopted by Luke in describing this event (ch. xvii. 29)—**upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah**—and also upon Admah and Zeboim (Deut. xxix. 23; Hosea xi. 8), Bela, or Zoar, of the five cities of the Jordan circle (ch. xiv. 2, 8) being exempted—**brimstone and fire**—גָּפְרִית; properly pitch, though the name was afterwards transferred to other inflammable materials (Gesenius); וְאֵשׁ, and fire, which, though sometimes used of lightning, as in 1 Kings xviii. 38; 2 Kings i. 10, 12, 14; Job i. 16, may here describe a different sort of igneous agency. Whether this Divinely-sent rain was "burning pitch" (Keil), or lightning which ignited the bituminous soil (Clericus), or a volcanic eruption which overwhelmed all the region (Lynch, Kitto), it was clearly miraculous in its nature, and designed as a solemn punitive infliction on the cities of the plain—**from the Lord**—*i. e. Jehovah* (the Son) rained down from *Jehovah* (the Father), as if suggesting a distinction of persons in the Godhead (Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Athanasius, *et alii*, Delitzsch, Lange, Wordsworth); otherwise the phrase is regarded as "an elegancy of speech" (Aben Ezra), "an emphatic repetition" (Calvin), a more exact characterisation of the storm (Clericus, Rosenmüller) as being **out of heaven**.

Ver. 25.—**And he overthrew**—literally, *turned over*, as a cake; whence utterly destroyed (cf. Deut. xxix. 23; *κατέστρεψε*, LXX.; *subvertit*, Vulgate). In Arabic "the overthrown" is a title applied, *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gesenius). From the use of the expression *καταστροφῇ* (2 Pet. ii. 6), Wordsworth thinks an earthquake may have accompanied the burning—**those cities**,—that they were submerged as well as overthrown (Josephus) is a doubtful inference from ch. xiv. 3 (*vide infra*, ver. 28, on the site of cities of the plain). The archaic הָאֵל is again employed (cf. ch. xix. 8)—**and all the plain**,—*kikkar*, circle or district (ch. xiii. 10)—**and all the inhabitants of the cities**,—a proof of their entire corruption (ch. xviii. 32)—**and that which grew upon the ground**—literally, *that which sprouts forth from the ground*, the produce of the soil; thus converting "a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein" (Ps. cvii. 34).

Ver. 26.—**But his wife looked back from behind him**,—*i. e.* went behind him and looked back; *ἐπέβλεψεν* (LXX.), implying wistful regard; *respiciens* (Vulgate); an act expressly forbidden by the angel (ver. 17)—**and she became** (literally, *she was*, conveying an idea of complete and instantaneous judgment) **a pillar of salt**. נְצִיב מֶלַח; *στήλη ἁλός* (LXX.); a statue or column of fossil salt, such as exists in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea. That she was literally transformed into a pillar of salt (Josephus, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Wordsworth), though not impossible, is scarcely likely. A more probable interpretation is that she was killed by the fiery and sulphurous vapour with which the atmosphere was impregnated, and afterwards became encrusted with salt (Aben Ezra, Keil, Lange, Murphy, Quarry), though against this it has been urged (1) that the air was not filled with "salt sulphurous rain," but with fire and brimstone; and (2) that the heaven-sent tempest did not operate in the way described on the other inhabitants of Sodom (Inglis). A third explanation regards the expression as allegorical, and intimating that the fate of Lot's wife was an *everlasting* monument of the danger of disregarding the word of the Lord, either as a covenant of salt signifies a perpetual covenant (Clark), or with reference to the salt pillars which, in a similar manner, attest the destruction of the cities (Inglis). The notion that Lot's wife, returning to the city, stuck fast *in terra salsuginosa*, like a salt pillar (Dathius), and that she perished in the flames, having afterwards erected to her memory a monument of the salt stone of the region (Michaelis), may be disregarded.

Ver. 27.—**And Abraham gat up early in the morning** (of the catastrophe) **to the place** (*i. e.* and went to the place) **where he stood before the Lord** (*vide* on ch. xviii. 22).

Ver. 28.—**And he looked toward**—literally, *towards the face*, or visible side (cf. ch. xviii. 16 where the same phrase is employed to describe the act of the angels on leaving Mamre)—**Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain**, or Jordan circle. The cities of the plain are commonly believed to have been situated at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. The principal

reasons assigned for this conclusion may be stated. 1. Josephus and Jerome, the one representing Jewish, and the other Christian, tradition, both speak of a Zoar as existing in that locality. 2. The difference of level between the northern and southern ends of the lake, the one according to Lynch being 1300 feet, and the other not more than 16 feet, seems to favour the idea that the latter is of recent formation, having been, in fact, submerged at the time of the overthrow of the cities. 3. A ridge of rock-salt on the west of the Vale of Salt is called by the name *Jebel Usdum*, in which a trace of the word Sodom is by some detected; and the pillars of salt that in that region have from time to time been detached from the salt cliffs have been designated by the name of Lot's wife (*Bint Sheikh Lot*). 4. The statement of ch. xiv. 3 appears to imply that the Salt Sea now covers what was originally the vale of Siddim. 5. The expression "like the land of Egypt as thou comest to Zoar" (ch. xiii. 10) is suggestive rather of the southern than of the northern extremity of the lake as the site of the Pentapolis. It may be added that this opinion has received the sanction of Robinson, Stanley, Porter, Thomson ('The Land and the Book'), and other eminent geographers. On the other hand, there are reasons for believing that the true site of the cities was at the north, and not the south, of the Dead Sea. 1. The circle of the Jordan was visible from the Bethel plateau (ch. xiii. 10); the southern extremity of the Dead Sea is not. 2. From the heights above Hebron or Mamre, though the actual circle is not visible, "yet the depression between the nearer hills and those of Gilead can be perceived, and Abraham could at once identify the locality whence the smoke arose," after Sodom's burning. 3. Chedorlaomer's route (ch. xiv. 7—14) was from Kadesh to Hazezon-tamar, midway up the western shore of the Dead Sea, from Hazezon-tamar to the vale of Siddim, and from Siddim to Dan, the natural conclusion being that on reaching Hazezon-tamar he did not turn southward, but continued marching northwards. 4. Moses from Mount Nebo (Deut. xxxiv. 3) beheld "the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar," which was certainly possible if Zoar was in the line of vision with the plain and the city of Jericho, but as certainly impossible if it was at the southern extremity of the lake. This view has been advocated by Grove (Smith's 'Biblical Dictionary,' art. Zoar) and by Tristram ('Land of Israel,' pp. 354—358, and 'Land of Moab,' pp. 330—334), and has been adopted by Drew ('Imp. Bible Dict.,' art. Sodom), Dykes ('Abraham, the Friend of God,' p. 185), and Inglis ('Genesis,' p. 168). **And beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a** (literally, *of the*) **furnace.** Thus the appalling catastrophe proclaimed its reality to Abraham; to subsequent ages it stamped a witness of its severity (1) *upon the region itself*, in the bleak and desolate aspect it has ever since possessed; (2) *upon the page of inspiration*, being by subsequent Scripture writers constantly referred to as a standing warning against incurring the Almighty's wrath (Deut. xxix. 22; Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18; l. 40; Lam. iv. 6; Amos iv. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 6; Jude 7); and (3) *upon the course of ancient tradition*, which it powerfully affected. Cf. Tacitus, 'Hist.,' v. 7: "Haud procul inde campi, quos ferunt olim uberes, magnisque urbibus habitatos, fulminum jactu arsisse; et manere vestigia; terramque ipsam specie torridam vim frugiferam perdidisse; nam cuncta atra et inania velut in cinerem vanescunt. Ego, sicut inclitas quondam urbes igne celesti flagrasse concesserim." For traditional notices of this event by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pliny, Ovid, &c. *vide* Rosenmüller (Scholia I. ch. xix. 25).

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 24.—*The judgment of fire.* I. THE DELIVERANCE OF LOT. 1. *Mercifully warned.* The intimation conveyed by the angels was—(1) Explicit; the city was to be destroyed. The cry for vengeance could no longer be resisted. The cup of its iniquity was full. (2) Emphatic; there was no dubiety about the announcement. Already the doom had been decreed, and they had come to be the ministers of its execution. (3) Merciful; it was designed to secure the escape of himself and friends from the impending overthrow. "Whatsoever thou hast, bring them out of this place." (4) Timely; there was still ample opportunity for not only getting clear out of the perilous region himself, but for alarming his daughters' intended husbands. So are sinners warned clearly, expressly, graciously, and opportunely in the gospel to flee from the wrath to come, to escape from the city of destruction. 2. *Urgently hastened.* Notwithstanding the angel's warning, it is obvious that Lot trifled, probably from a latent apprehension that there was plenty of time, if not from any secret dubiety as to the need for the celestial exhortation; and so do sinners dally yet

with the solemn announcement of the gospel, which necessitates that they be vehemently pressed, like Lot, with—(1) Earnest admonition. "Arise!" "Up!" "Get thee out of this place!" (2) Serious caution. "Lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." 3. *Graciously assisted.* Even the urgency displayed by the angels would not have sufficed to rescue Lot, had they not extended to him and his worldly-minded partner a helping hand. Hankering after Sodom, perhaps thinking of the wealth they had to leave, the good man and his wife still lingered, and were at last only dragged forth by main force beyond the precincts of the doomed city. It reminds us that few, probably none, would ever escape from the city of destruction if Divine grace were not practically to lay hold of them and drag them forth; and even this Divine grace would not do unless the Lord were specially merciful to them, as he was to Lot. 4. *Minutely directed.* To the further prosecution of their journey they were not left without most careful instructions as to how they might secure their safety; and neither are awakened sinners, who have been aroused to see their peril and to start upon the way of life, permitted to struggle on without celestial guidance as to how to make their calling and election sure. Like the fleeing Lot and his wife, they are counselled (1) to be in earnest, seeing it is their life for which they flee; (2) to beware of backsliding, since he who looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God; (3) to indulge in no delay, since so long as one continues in the plain of his natural condition he stands in imminent peril; and (4) to persevere until he reaches the mount of salvation in Jesus Christ.

II. THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM. 1. *Supernatural.* Whatever the natural forces employed in the destruction of the fair cities of the Jordan circle, their employment with such severity and at such a time, viz., precisely at the moment when the moral degradation of the people showed them to be ripe for judgment, was a signal demonstration of the miraculous character of the catastrophe; as indeed the narrative alleges it to have been a phenomenon altogether out of the common course of events: "Jehovah rained down fire from Jehovah." 2. *Unexpected.* It does not appear that the inhabitants of Sodom generally were warned of the approaching fire-storm, though, if Lot's sons-in-law may be accepted as an indication of the temper in which the people at that time were, any such announcement would only have been listened to with mocking incredulity. So was it in the days of Noah (Matt. xxiv. 38); so will it be in the end of the world (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4). 3. *Complete.* The cities with their inhabitants, the fields with their vegetation, were engulfed in the sulphureous baptism and "turned into ashes." As overwhelming in its kind, though not as sweeping in its extent, as had been the previous submergence of the world by a flood of water, the devastation sent upon the fair Pentapolis of the Jordan circle was a ghastly shadow and premonition of that vengeance of eternal fire which shall yet devour the ungodly (2 Thess. i. 8). 4. *Righteous.* It was a just judgment which had been richly merited, as the visit of the angels had convincingly demonstrated. Indeed that previous unveiling of the filthiness of Sodom which had taken place may be viewed as having been designed to supply a visible justification of the righteousness of the great Judge in consigning them to so disastrous an overthrow. And so before the infliction of the great day of wrath upon the impenitent and the ungodly there will be a revelation of the secret characters of all hearts and lives, that "thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (Ps. li. 3). 5. *Public.* In particular, besides being experienced by the unhappy sufferers and observed by the trembling fugitives who had sought refuge in Zoar, it was witnessed by Abraham, who gat him up early, and, looking towards Sodom, saw the smoke of the country ascending like the smoke of a furnace to heaven—a fit emblem of the terrible publicity which will invest the final judgment of a sinful world (Matt. xxv. 31—46; 2 Thess. i. 7—10; Rev. xviii. 9).

III. THE FATE OF LOT'S WIFE. 1. *Intensely melancholy.* Overtaken by the sulphureous storm, she was transfixed where she stood, and in a moment after wrapt in a sheet of saline incrustation. Affecting in itself, her doom was rendered all the more impressive from the circumstance that she had so nearly escaped. Alas, nearly saved means wholly lost! 2. *Truly deserved.* Contrary to the angel's instructions, she had looked behind. Thus she had brought her tragic fate upon herself. Obedience would have saved her; disobedience proved her ruin. Whether

she was lost eternally it is not safe to say, but her temporal destruction had been righteously incurred. 3. *Solemnly suggestive.* It was doubtless designed to teach many lessons, such as the danger of disobedience, the folly of delay, the severity of the Divine judgments, and the intensity of the Divine displeasure against sin.

Lessons:—1. The difficulty of saving a good man (1 Pet. iv. 18). 2. The ability of God to punish sin (Heb. x. 31). 3. The danger of looking back (Heb. x. 26, 27, 38). 4. The possibility of being nearly saved, yet wholly lost (Mark xii. 34).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 23—25.—*The righteousness of God revealed.* The judgment of God upon Sodom and the cities of the plain. The deliverance of Lot. The reception of the two angels by Lot was a great contrast to that of the three by Abraham. The scene of the Divine judgment is suggestive. The plain of the Jordan was well watered, attracted Lot by its beauty and promise. Early civilisation gathered about such spots, but civilisation without religion is a blasting influence. There are hidden fountains of judgment ready to burst forth and pour the fire of Divine wrath upon the sinners. The man who "pitched his tent towards Sodom" became at last a townsman, "vexed with the filthy conversation," yet, but for Divine mercy, involved in its punishment. The whole narrative teaches important lessons, especially on the following points:—

I. A TRULY RELIGIOUS LIFE is not a mere secret of the soul, but HAS ITS APPROPRIATE PLACE AND SURROUNDINGS.

II. THE HOUSEHOLD of the true believer IS A LARGE ENOUGH CIRCLE IN WHICH TO MANIFEST SINCERITY AND FAITHFULNESS, yet must we take heed that our house is well defended against the invasions of the corrupt world.

III. HOW GREAT A RESULT COMES OUT OFTEN FROM A SMALL BEGINNING OF ERROR! The selfishness of Lot's first choice of his residence was the seed of evil which multiplied into all the subsequent suffering and wrong.

IV. "Behold the GOODNESS and SEVERITY OF GOD"—mingled judgment and mercy, but not mingled in a confused manner, with perfect order. The man who had joined with Abraham in the covenant with Jehovah, who with all his faults was yet a believer, is warned, rescued by angels; able by his intercession to obtain mercy for others.

V. The DIVINE JUSTICE which is manifested on the large scale as BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD is also revealed in the smaller sphere of HOUSEHOLDS and families. Lot's wife is an apostate, and becomes involved in the destruction of the wicked. His sons-in-law mock at the Divine warning. His daughters become the incestuous originators of nations which afterwards greatly trouble the history of the people of God.

VI. THE SAME STEADFASTNESS OF GOD HAS TWO SIDES OR ASPECTS OF IT. "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar." The same day, while the sun was serenely smiling on the city of refuge, the storm of fire and destruction from heaven was gathering over the doomed people and ready to burst upon them. "When God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow."—R.

Ver. 26.—*The danger of falling back.* "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Every part of this narrative suggestive of lessons. Reminded how "the righteous scarcely saved," and of the danger of an amiable weakness. In Lot's sons-in-law we see how the world receives the gospel (cf. Ezek. xx. 49; James i. 24). In his wife, one convinced, but not converted; seeking safety, but with a divided aim (James i. 8). In the angel's help, God's watchful care, even where the need is unknown. Text teaches the responsibility of those who hear the gospel. Dangers surrounding us, but a way of safety (Ps. ci. 1; 2 Cor. ii. 16). But not enough to be roused (Matt. x. 22; Heb. xii. 1). Many are awakened to flee, yet look back (Luke ix. 62). Lot's wife not deaf to the call; did not think it fancy; really believed; felt the danger, and fled (2 Cor. vi. 17; Rev.

xviii. 4). But the sun rose; the valley beautiful; home attractive; no signs of danger. *Must* she leave all; and at once? She paused. That pause was death.

I. May be roused by ALARM OF CONSCIENCE and yet look back (cf. Matt. xii. 43—45). Some, intent on the world, think not of the future. Preaching seems only a venerable form; prayer a proper homage to God. But as to anything more, no hurry. But a time of anxiety comes. Perhaps a wave of revival, or some special occurrence—illness, bereavement, care. Eternity is brought near, false confidence dispelled (Isa. xxviii. 17). Then in earnest to seek the true refuge (Heb. vi. 18). The Bible read; prayer a real pleading. But the sun arises. The immediate cause passes away. Fears fade away. Then a looking back. Surely some of you can remember times of earnestness. Perhaps in hours of anxious watching, or in preparation for communion, or God has spoken directly to the soul and made you feel his presence (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17). Then the blessedness of accepted salvation was felt. The message was not a parable then. The Bible and prayer were precious then. But time went on. The immediate influence gone. All as before. Old ways asserted their power; hard to give them up. In mercy the call once more. Awake; the storm is at hand, though thou seest it not. Pray that the Holy Spirit may transform thy heart.

II. May be moved by EXAMPLE OF OTHERS, yet turn back. She felt her husband's earnestness, and went with him, but so far only. We know the power of example. When we see those we love affected, we are moved to be as they. So at the preaching of John the Baptist. So at times of missions. Have any felt this influence; been stirred to read and pray? It is well. But has it lasted? For a real saving change there must be a personal transaction with the Lord as a living Saviour; a laying hold of him, a real desire and effort that the will and whole nature be submitted to him.

III. A MIGHTIER POWER STILL MAY ACT UPON THE SOUL. While Lot lingered angels laid hold of hands. There are times when God pleads urgently. One refuge after another swept away. Call upon call, sign upon sign, till the will seems conquered. But all is not done (Phil. iii. 13). Such pleadings neglected, cease. Observe, God led Lot out of Sodom, not to Zoar. There is work still to be done (2 Pet. i. 10). The question is not as to the past, but as to the present. It will not save a man that he was once anxious. Look not back. Look to Jesus (Heb. xii. 2). Let earnestness in every part of Christian life testify that you are not looking back (Heb. x. 39).—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 29.—**And it came to pass**—not a pluperfect (Rosenmüller), as if a direct continuation of the preceding narrative, but a preterite, being the commencement of a new subdivision of the history in which the writer treats of Lot's residence in Zoar—**when God**—Elohim. Hence, as a fragment of the original Elohist's composition, the present verse is by the pseudo-criticism connected with ch. xvii. 27 (Ilgen, Tuch, Bleek); but "a greater abruptness of style and a more fragmentary mode of composition" than this would indicate "could not easily be imagined" (Kalisch). The change in the Divine name is sufficiently explained by the supposition that the destruction of the cities of the plain was not at the moment viewed by the writer in its connection with the Abrahamic covenant and intercession, but as a sublime vindication of Divine justice (cf. Quarry, p. 444)—**destroyed** (literally, *in he destroying by Elohim*, or in Elohim's destroying) **the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham.** If the narrative containing the intercession of Abraham and the overthrow of Sodom was due to the Jehovist, how came the earlier author to know anything about those events? The obvious allusions to them in the present verse could only have been made by one acquainted with them. Either, therefore, the present verse proceeded from the hand of the so-called Jehovist, or it requires explanation how in the original document this should be the first and only occasion on which they are referred to (cf. Quarry, p. 445). **And**—in answer to Abraham's prayer (ch. xviii. 23)—**sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow** (there is no reason to suppose that Abraham was aware of his nephew's escape), **when he overthrew**—literally, *in the overthrowing of the cities*, the inf. being construed with the case of its verb (*vide* Gesenius, § 133)—**the cities in the which**—one of which (cf. Judges xv. 7)—**Lot dwelt.**

Ver. 30.—**And Lot went up out of Zoar** (probably soon after), **and dwelt in the moun-**

tain (*i. e.* of Moab, on the east of the Dead Sea), **and his two daughters**—step-daughters, it has been suggested, if Lot married a widow who was the mother of the two girls (Starke) —**with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar** —from which the panic-stricken inhabitants may have fled towards the mountains (Murphy), either because at that time it was shaken by an earthquake (Jerome, Rosenmüller); or because he dreaded the conflagration which devoured the other cities might spread thither (Poole, Kalisch, Wordsworth), or the rising waters of the Dead Sea which engulfed them might reach to it (Bush) —apprehensions which were groundless and unbelieving, since God had granted Zoar for an asylum (Lange); or because he saw the wickedness of the inhabitants, who had not been improved by Sodom's doom (Vatablus, Inglis); or simply because he was driven by "a blind anxiety of mind" (Calvin). **And he dwelt in a cave,**—*i. e.* in one of those cavernous recesses with which the Moabitish mountains abound, and which already had been converted into dwelling-places by the primitive inhabitants of the region (cf. ch. xiv. 6)—**he and his two daughters.**

Ver. 31.—**And the firstborn said unto the younger,**—showing that she had not escaped the pollution, if she had the destruction, of Sodom. "It was time that Lot had left the cities of the plain. No wealth could compensate for the moral degradation into which his family had sunk" (Inglis)—**Our father is old,**—an indirect confirmation of the inference (*vide* ch. xi. 26) that Abram was younger than Haran, since Lot, Haran's son, is now an old man—**and there is not a man in the earth**—not in the entire world (Origen, Irenæus, Chrysostom, Kalisch), which is scarcely probable, since they knew that Zoar had been spared; but either in the district whither they had fled (Calvin, Willet), being under the impression that, living in so desolate a region, they could have no more intercourse with mankind; or in the land of Canaan (Ainsworth, Bush), meaning that there were no more godly men with whom they might marry; or perhaps they meant that no man would now care to unite himself with them, the remnant of a curse-stricken region (Knobel, Keil)—**to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth.**

Ver. 32.—**Come, let us make our father drink wine,**—either, therefore, Lot had not left Sodom totally unprovided (Inglis), or some little time had elapsed after his escaping to the mountain cave, since his daughters are provided with this intoxicating beverage—**and we will lie with him.** Considering the town in which the daughters of Lot had been reared, the mother of whom they were the offspring, and the example they had received from their father (ver. 8), "we can understand, though we cannot cease to abhor, their incestuous conduct" (Kalisch). Their proposal was revolting and unnatural in the extreme. By subsequent Mosaic legislation a transgression of such enormity was rendered punishable by death. Even in the present instance the perpetrators were not wholly unconscious of the wickedness of their conduct. The fact that they required a stratagem for the attainment of their purpose shows that at least they could not calculate on their father's approbation. The entire story has been regarded as the invention of later Jewish hatred to the Moabites and Ammonites (De Wette), a conjecture believed by some to be "not improbable" (Rosenmüller); but if so, how should the same writer exhibit Abraham (ch. xviii. 23) as filled with compassionate tenderness towards the cities of the plain? (Hävernick). **That we may preserve seed of our father.** Literally, *quicken or vivify seed* (cf. ver. 34). Lot's daughters may be credited with whatever virtue may be supposed to reside in this motive for their conduct.

Ver. 33.—**And they made their father drink wine that night**—which was sinful both in them and him (*vide* Isa. v. 11; Prov. xx. 1; Hab. ii. 15)—**and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.** That it was his own daughter *quacum concumberet* (Rosenmüller), being so intoxicated that he could not discern who it was to whom he had approached, or even what he was doing (Keil). The reading "when *he* lay down and when he arose" (LXX.) is incorrect, and the explanations that Lot was a mere unconscious instrument in this disgraceful transaction (Kalisch), that he was entirely ignorant of all that had taken place (Chrysostom, Cajetan), that he was struck on account of his intemperance with a spirit of stupor (Calvin), are not warranted by the text.

Ver. 34.—**And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.**

Ver. 35.—**And they made their father drink wine that night also.** The facility with which Lot allowed himself to be inebriated by his daughters Clericus regards as a sign that before this the old man had been accustomed to over-indulgence in wine. The inference, however, of Kalisch, that because "Lot's excess in the enjoyment of wine is no more blamed than it was in Noah," "the narrative exempts him from all serious reproach," can scarcely be admitted. **And the younger arose, and lay with him** (following the bad example of her sister); **and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose** (*vide supra*, ver. 33).

Ver. 36.—**Thus were both the daughters of Lot** (who after this disappears from sacred history, not even his death being recorded) **with child by their father.**

Ver. 37.—**And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab** = *Meab*, from the father, alluding to his incestuous origin (LXX., which adds λέγουσα ἐκ τοῦ πατρός μοῦ; Augustine, Jerome, Delitzsch, Keil); though *Mo* (= water, an Arabic euphemism for the *semen virile*) and *ab* has been advanced as a more correct derivation (Rosenmüller). **The same is the father of the Moabites**—who originally inhabited the country north-east of the Dead Sea, between the Jabbok and the Arnon (Deut. ii. 20), but were afterwards driven by the Amorites south of the Arnon—**unto this day.** This phrase, indicating a variable period from a few years to a few centuries (cf. ch. xlviii. 13; Exod. x. 6; Numb. xxii. 39; Josh. xxii. 8), cannot be regarded as a trace of post-Mosaic authorship (De Wette, *et alii*), since in Genesis it is always used of events which had taken place several centuries before the time of Moses, as in ch. xxvi. 33; xxxv. 20; xlvii. 26 (cf. Keil, 'Introduction,' part i. § 2, div. 1, § 38).

Ver. 38.—**And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi.** *I. e.* son of my people (LXX., Jerome, Augustine), meaning that her child was the offspring of her own kind and blood (Rosenmüller), or the son of her relative (Kalisch), or of an unmixed race ('Speaker's Commentary'). **The same is the father of the children of Ammon**—an unsettled people who occupied the territory between the Jabbok and the Arnon, from which they had ejected the Rephaims or Zamzummims (Deut. ii. 22), and in which they possessed a strong city, Rabbah (2 Sam. xi. 1); in their habits more migratory and marauding than the Moabites (Isa. xv., xvi.; Jer. xlviii.), and in their religion worshippers of Molech, "the abomination of the Ammonites" (1 Kings xi. 7)—**unto this day.**

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 29.—*The last days of Lot.* I. Haunted by terror. 1. *The terror of Divine judgment.* The appalling spectacle of Sodom's overthrow had no doubt filled him with alarm. And so are God's judgments in the earth designed to put the souls of men in fear (Ps. ix. 20; xlvi. 8—10; cxix. 120). 2. *The terror of men.* Dwelling in Zoar, he apprehended an outburst of wrath from the citizens, who probably regarded him as the cause of the ruin which had invaded Sodom. So are better men than Lot sometimes overtaken by the fear of man (2 Sam. xxii. 5; Ps. xviii. 4), though they should not (Isa. li. 12). 3. *The terror of conscience.* That Lot enjoyed while in Zoar a calm and undisturbed repose of heart and mind is scarcely supposable. Rather it may be safely conjectured that after the storm and the fire and the earthquake through which he had lately passed, the still small voice of conscience spoke to him in awe-inspiring accents, unveiling his past life, reproving him of sin, and piercing him through with many sorrows; and that under the agitations produced by its accusations and reproaches he became afraid, and withdrew to the mountains. "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all."

II. Sounding the lower deeps. 1. *Descending into unbelief.* God had promised to spare Zoar for him, and him in Zoar, and one would have thought Lot had been sufficiently warned of the sin of distrusting God. Yet he is scarcely established in the city which God had granted in response to his own prayer than he begins to think it hardly safe to remain within its precincts. How inveterate is unbelief! 2. *Plunging into sin.* The details of the present story clearly show that Lot, when he went to the mountain cave, endeavoured to escape from his terrors not by carrying them to God's throne, but by drowning them in dissipation. The wretched man, who had once been a saint in God's Church, must have been in the habit of drinking to excess, else his daughters would never have thought of their abominable stratagem. Only one little gleam of virtue can be detected as entitled to be laid to Lot's account, viz., that his daughters apparently believed that unless their father was drunk he would never be brought to assent to their lewd proposal. 3. *Sinking into shame.* Twice overcome by wine, he is twice in succession dishonoured by his daughters; and twice over, while in his drink stupor, he allows himself to commit an act which almost out-Sodoms Sodom. To what depths a saint may fall when once he turns his back on God!

III. Disappearing into oblivion. Nothing could more distinctly mark the Divine disapprobation with Lot's conduct than the fact that after this he was suffered—1. *To live an unrecorded life*, being never heard of again in the pages of Holy Scripture.

2. *To die an unnoticed death.* Where and how he met his end the historian does not condescend to state. 3. *To sink into an unknown grave.* Whether buried in his mountain cave or entombed in the Jordan valley no man knoweth unto this day.

See—1. The danger of turning aside from God and good men (Heb. iii. 12; x. 25). 2. The melancholy end of a worldly life (1 Cor. x. 6; Phil. iii. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 10). 3. The bitter fruits of parental neglect (1 Sam. ii. 27—36; Prov. xxix. 15—17).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 29.—*The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.* I. THE VISIBLE JUDGMENT. "God overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt." 1. The reason. 2. The instrumentality. 3. The reality. 4. The lessons of the overthrow.

II. THE UNKNOWN MERCY. "He sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow." To Abraham this was—1. A great mercy. 2. A mercy granted in answer to prayer. But—3. An unknown mercy, there being no reason to believe that Abraham ever saw Lot again, or knew of his deliverance.

Learn—1. That God always mixes mercy with his judgments. 2. That his mercies are not always so perceptible to the eye of sense and reason as his judgments. 3. That God's people get more mercies poured into their cups than they are at all times cognisant of.—W.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1.—**And Abraham journeyed** (*vide* ch. xii. 9) **from thence.** Mamre (ch. xviii. 1). In search of pasture, as on a previous occasion (Keil); or in consequence of the hostility of his neighbours (Calvin); or because he longed to escape from the scene of so terrible a calamity as he had witnessed (Calvin, Willet, Murphy); or in order to benefit as many places and peoples as possible by his residence among them (A Lapide); or perhaps being impelled by God, who designed thereby to remind him that Canaan was not intended for a permanent habitation, but for a constant pilgrimage (Poole, Kalisch). **Toward the south country.** *Negeb*, the southern district of Palestine (ch. xii. 9; xiii. 1); the central region of Judæa being called *Hahor*, or the Highlands; the eastern, towards the Dead Sea, *Midhbar;* and the western *Shephelah* (Lange). **And dwelled between Kadesh and Shur** (*vide* ch. xvi. 14 and xvi. 7), **and sojourned in Gerar** (*vide* ch. x. 19).

Ver. 2.—**And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister.** As formerly he had done on descending into Egypt (ch. xii. 13). That Abraham should a second time have resorted to this ignoble expedient after the hazardous experience of Egypt and the richly-merited rebuke of Pharaoh, but more especially after the assurance he had lately received of his own acceptance before God (ch. xv. 6), and of Sarah's destiny to be the mother of the promised seed (ch. xvii. 16), is well nigh unaccountable, and almost irreconcilable with any degree of faith and piety. Yet the lapse of upwards of twenty years since that former mistake may have deadened the impression of sinfulness which Pharaoh's rebuke must have left upon his conscience; while altogether the result of that experiment may, through a common misinterpretation of Divine providence, have encouraged him to think that God would watch over the purity of his house as he had done before. Thus, though in reality a tempting of God, the patriarch's repetition of his early venture may have had a secret connection with his deeply-grounded faith in the Divine promise (cf. Kalisch *in loco*). **And Abimelech**—*i. e. Father-king*, a title of the Philistine kings (ch. xxi. 22; xxvi. 1; Psalm xxxiv. 1), as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian (ch. xii. 15), and Hamor of the Shechemite (ch. xxxiv. 4) monarchs; cf. *Padishah* (father-king), a title of the Persian kings, and *Atalik* (father, properly paternity), of the Khans of Bokhara (Gesenius, p. 6)—**king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.** *I. e.* into his harem, as Pharaoh previously had done (ch. xii. 15), either having been fascinated by her beauty, which, although she was twenty years older than when she entered Egypt, need not have been much faded (*vide* ch. xii. 11; Calvin), or may have been miraculously rejuvenated when she received strength to conceive seed (Kurtz); or, what is as probable, having sought through her an alliance with the rich and powerful nomade prince who had entered his dominions (Delitzsch).

Ver. 3.—**But God**—*Elohim;* whence the present chapter, with the exception of ver. 18, is assigned to the Elohist (Tuch, De Wette, Bleek, Davidson), and the incident

at Gerar explained as the original legend, of which the story of Sarah's abduction by Pharaoh is the Jehovistic imitation. But (1) the use of Elohim throughout the present chapter is sufficiently accounted for by observing that it describes the intercourse of Deity with a heathen monarch, to whom the name of Jehovah was unknown, while the employment of the latter term in ver. 18 may be ascribed to the fact that it is the covenant God of Sarah who there interposes for her protection; and (2) the apparent resemblance between the two incidents is more than counterbalanced by the points of diversity which subsist between them—**came to Abimelech in a dream**—the usual mode of self-revelation employed by Elohim towards heathen. Cf. Pharaoh's dreams (ch. xli. 1) and Nebuchadnezzar's (Dan. iv. 5), as distinguished from the visions in which Jehovah manifests his presence to his people. Cf. the theophanies vouchsafed to Abraham (ch. xii. 7; xv. 1; xviii. 1) and to Jacob (ch. xxviii. 13; xxxii. 24), and the visions granted to Daniel (Dan. vii. 1—28; x. 5—9) and the prophets generally, which, though sometimes occurring in dreams, were yet a higher form of Divine manifestation than the dreams—**by night, and said to him, Behold, thou** art but **a dead man,**—literally, *behold thyself dying*, or *about to die* = σὺ ἀποθνήσκεις (LXX.). Abimelech, it is probable, was by this time suffering from the malady which had fallen on his house (*vide* ver. 17)—**for** (*i. e.* on account of) **the woman which thou hast taken; for she** is **a man's wife**—literally, *married to a husband*, or under lordship to a lord (cf. Deut. xxii. 22).

Ver. 4.—**But Abimelech had not come near her.** Apparently withheld by the peculiar disease which had overtaken him. The statement of the present verse (a similar one to which is not made with reference to Pharaoh) was clearly rendered necessary by the approaching birth of Isaac, who might otherwise have been said to be the child not of Abraham, but of the Philistine king. **And he said, Lord,**—*Adonai* (*vide* ch. xv. 2)—**wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?** Anticipating that the stroke of Divine judgment was about to fall upon his people as well as on himself, with allusion to the fate of Sodom (Knobel), which he deprecates for his people at least on the ground that they are innocent of the offence charged against him (cf. 2 Sam. xxiv. 17). That Abimelech and his people, like Melchisedeck and his subjects, had some knowledge of the true God, and that the Canaanites generally at this period had not reached the depth of moral degradation into which the cities of the Jordan circle had sunk before their overthrow, is apparent from the narrative. The comparative virtue, therefore, of these tribes was a proof that the hour had not arrived for the infliction on them of the doom of extermination.

Ver. 5.—**Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He** is **my brother.** From which it is clear that the Philistine monarch, equally with the Egyptian Pharaoh, shrank from the sin of adultery. **In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.** *I. e.* he assumes the right of kings to take unmarried persons into their harems.

Ver. 6.—**And God said unto him in a dream,**—"It is in full agreement with the nature of dreams that the communication should be made in several, and not in one single act; cf. chs. xxxvii. and xli.; Matt. ii." (Lange)—**Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart**—*i. e.* judged from thy moral standpoint. The words do not imply a Divine acquittal as to the essential guiltiness of the act, which is clearly involved in the instruction to seek the mediation of God's prophet (ver. 7). **For I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her** (*vide* on ver. 4).

Ver. 7.—**Now therefore restore the man** his **wife.** Literally, *the wife of the man*, God now speaking of Abraham *non tanquam de homine quolibet, sed peculiariter sibi charum* (Calvin). **For he is a prophet.** *Nabi*, from *naba*, to cause to bubble up; hence to pour forth, applied to one who speaks by a Divine afflatus (Deut. xiii. 2; Judges vi. 8; 1 Sam. ix. 9; 1 Kings xxii. 7). The office of the Nabi was twofold—to announce the will of God to men (Exod. iv. 15; vii. 1), and also to intercede with God for men (ver. 7; Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11). The use of the term Nabi in this place neither proves that the spirit of prophecy had not existed from the beginning (cf. ch. ix. 25—27), nor shows that the Pentateuch, which always uses this term, cannot be of greater antiquity than the time of Samuel, before which, according to 1 Sam. ix. 9, the prophet was called a seer (Bohlen, Hartmann). As used in the Pentateuch the term describes the recipient of Divine revelations, and as such it was incorporated in the Mosaic legislation. During the period of the Judges the term *Roeh* appears to have come into use, and to have held its ground until the reformation of Samuel, when the older theocratic term was again reverted to (*vide* Hävernick, § 19). **And he shall pray for thee** (*vide supra*), **and thou shalt live.** Literally, *live thou*, the imperative being used for the future in strong prophetic assurances (cf. Ps. cxxviii. 5; *vide* Gesenius, § 130). **And if thou restore** her **not, know thou that thou shalt surely die,**—literally,

dying thou shalt die (cf. ch. ii. 17)—**thou, and all that are thine.**

Ver. 8.—**Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning,**—an evidence of the terror into which he had been cast by the Divine communication, and of his earnest desire to carry out the Divine instructions—**and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears**:—confessed his fault, explained his danger, and affirmed his intention to repair his error; a proof of the humility of this God-fearing king (Lange)—**and the men were sore afraid.** It spoke well for the king's household that they received the communication with seriousness.

Ver. 9.—**Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him** (in the presence of his people), **What hast thou done unto us?** —identifying himself once more with his people, as he had already done in responding to God (ver. 4)—**and what have I offended thee** (thus modestly allowing that he may himself have unwittingly occasioned the sin of Abraham), **that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?** The gravamen of Abimelech's accusation was that Abraham had led him and his to offend against God, and so to lay themselves open to the penalties of wrong-doing. **Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.** Literally, *deeds which ought not to be done thou hast done with me* (cf. ch. xxxiv. 7; Levit. iv. 2, 13; *vide* Glass, 'Philol. Tract., l. iii. t. iii. c. vi.). The king's words were unquestionably designed to convey a severe reproach.

Ver. 10.—**And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou,**—either, What hadst thou in view? (Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Murphy, *et alii*), or, What didst thou see? Didst thou see any of my people taking the wives of strangers and murdering their husbands? (Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary')—**that thou hast done this thing?**

Ver. 11.—**And Abraham said** (offering as his first apology for his sinful behaviour the fear which he entertained of the depravity of the people), **Because I thought,**—literally, *said* (sc. in my heart)—**Surely the fear of God is not in this place**;—otherwise, *there is not any fear of God*, רַק having usually a confirming sense with reference to what follows (cf. Deut. iv. 6; 1 Kings xiv. 8; *vide* Gesenius, p. 779)—**and they will slay me for my wife's sake.**

Ver. 12.—**And yet indeed** she is **my sister.** This was the second of the patriarch's extenuating pleas, that he had not exactly lied, having uttered at least a half-truth. **She is the daughter of my father** (Terah), **but not the daughter of my mother.** That Sarah was the grand-daughter of Terah, *i. e.* the daughter of Haran, and sister of Lot, in other words, Iscah, has been maintained (Josephus, Augustine, Jerome, Jonathan). That she was Terah's niece, being a brother's daughter adopted by him, has received some support (Calvin); but there seems no reason for departing from the statement of the text, that she was her husband's half-sister, *i. e.* Terah's daughter by another wife than Abraham's mother (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Keil, Knobel). **And she became my wife.**

Ver. 13.—**And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander** (or to go on pilgrimages) **from my father's house,** —*Elohim*, usually construed with a singular verb, is here joined with a verb in the plural, as an accommodation to the polytheistic standpoint of Abimelech (Keil), as a proof that Elohim is to be viewed as a *Pluralis Majestaticus* (Kalisch), as referring to the plurality of Divine manifestations which Abraham had received (Lange), as showing that Elohim here signifies angels (Calvin), or, most likely, as an instance of the literal meaning of the term as the supernatural powers (Murphy). Cf. ch. xxxv. 7; Exod. xxii. 8; 2 Sam. vii. 23; Ps. lviii. 12—**that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me.** The third plea which the patriarch presented for his conduct, it had no special reference to Abimelech, but was the result of an old compact formed between himself and Sarah. **At every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother** (cf. ch. xii. 13).

Ver. 14.—**And Abimelech**—as Pharaoh did (ch. xii. 16), but with a different motive—**took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants.** The LXX. and Samaritan insert "a thousand didrachmas" after "took," in order to include Sarah's present mentioned in ver. 16; but the two donations are separated in order to distinguish them as Abraham's gift and Sarah's respectively (Rosenmüller, Delitzsch), or the sum of money may indicate the value of the sheep and oxen, &c. which Abraham received (Keil, Knobel, Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And gave them unto Abraham.** To propitiate his favour for the wrong he had suffered. Pharaoh's gifts were "for the sake of Sarah" (ch. xii. 16). **And restored him Sarah his wife.**

Ver. 15.—**And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.** Literally, *in the good in thine eyes;* the generous Philistine offering him a settlement within his borders, whereas the Egyptian monarch hastened his departure from the country (ch. xii. 20).

Ver. 16.—**And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand** pieces **of silver.** Literally, *a thousand of silver,* the exact weight of each piece being uncertain. If sacred shekels (Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch) their value would be over £130, if shekels

ordinary somewhat less. **Behold, he**—*i. e.* thy brother; or it, *i. e.* the present (LXX., Vulgate, Targums, Syriac)—**is to thee a covering of the eyes.** כְּסוּת עֵינַיִם (from a root signifying to cover over) has been understood as (1) a propitiatory gift = τιμή (LXX.), or (2) a veil for the protection of the face; and, according as the subject of the sentence has been regarded as Abraham or the sum of money, the sense of the clause has been given as either (1) he, *i. e.* thy brother, will be to thee a protection, hiding thee like a veil, from the voluptuous desires of others (Aben Ezra, Cajetan, Calvin, Kalisch); or (2) it, *i. e.* this present of mine, will be to thee a propitiatory offering to make thee overlook my offence (Chrysostom, Gesenius, Fürst, Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Murphy); or (3) a declaration of thy purity, and so a defence to thee against any calumnious aspersions (Castalio); or (4) the purchase-money of a veil to hide thy beauty, lest others be ensnared (Vulgate, Arabic, Kitto, Clark); or (5) the means of procuring that bridal veil which married females should never lay aside (cf. ch. xxiv. 65; Dathe, Vitringa, Michaelis, Baumgarten, Rosenmüller). The exact sense of this difficult passage can scarcely be said to have been determined, though of the above interpretations the choice seems to lie between the first and second. **Unto all that are with thee, and with all** other. *I. e.* in presence of thy domestics and of all with whom thou mayest yet mingle, either Abraham will be thy best defence, or let my gift be an atonement, or a veil, &c. **Thus she was reproved.** וְנֹכָחַת. If a third person singular niph. of יָכַח (Onkelos, Arabic, Kimchi, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Fürst), then it is the historian's statement signifying that Sarah had been convicted, admonished, and left defenceless (Gesenius); or, connecting the preceding words וְאֶת־כֹּל), that, with regard to all, right had been obtained (Fürst), or that all had been done that she might be righted (Murphy); but if a second person singular niph. (LXX., Vulgate, Delitzsch, Keil, Lange, Murphy, Kalisch), then it is a continuation of Abimelech's address, meaning neither καὶ πάντα ἀλήθευσον (LXX.), nor *memento te deprehensam* (Vulgate), but either, "and thou art reproved" (Wordsworth), or, "and thou wilt be recognised" (Kalisch), or, again connecting with the preceding words, "and with all, so thou art justified or set right" (Delitzsch, Keil, Lange), or, "and all this that thou mayest be righted" (Murphy) or "reproved" (Ainsworth).

Ver. 17.—**So Abraham prayed unto God.** Literally, *the Elohim*, the personal and true God, and not Elohim, or Deity in general, to whom belonged the cure of Abimelech and his household (Keil), as the next clause shows. **And God** (*Elohim*, without the art.) **healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants;**—*i. e.* his concubines, as distinguished from the women servants (ver. 14)—**and they bare** children. The verb may apply to both sexes, and the malady under which they suffered may be here described as one which prevented procreation, as the next verse explains.

Ver. 18.—**For the Lord** (*Jehovah; vide supra* on ver. 3) **had fast closed up all the wombs**—*i. e.* prevented conception, or produced barrenness (cf. ch. xvi. 2; Isa. lxvi. 9; 1 Sam. i. 5, 6; for the opposite, ch. xxix. 31; xxx. 22); "pœna convenientissima; quid enim convenientius esse poterat, quam ut amittat, qui ad se rapit aliena" (Musculus). *Vide* Hävernick, § 19—**of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife**—the motive obviously being to protect the purity of the promised seed.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—18.—*Abraham in Gerar, or two royal sinners.* I. THE SIN OF THE HEBREW PATRIARCH. 1. *An old sin repeated.* "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister." Twenty years before the same miserable equivocation had been circulated in Egypt. A sin once committed is not difficult to repeat, especially if its legitimate consequences, as in the case of Abraham and Sarah, have been mercifully averted. One is apt to fancy that a like immunity will attend its repetition. 2. *A worthless lie propagated.* "Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah." Designed for protection in both Egypt and Gerar, the ignoble expedient of the patriarch was in both places equally ineffectual. So does all sin tend to outwit itself, and in the end generally proves abortive in its designs. 3. *A deliberate fraud practised.* As Abraham explained to Abimelech, it was no sudden impulse on which he acted, but a preconcerted scheme which he had put in operation. Intended for the extenuation of his fault, this was in reality an aggravation. Sin leisurely and knowingly gone about is ever more heinous than that into which the heart and will are surprised. 4. *An unjustifiable suspicion entertained.* All the preceding sins had their origin in

what the event proved to be an altogether unwarranted estimate of Abimelech and his people. The patriarch said to himself, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake," without reflecting that he was not only deciding without evidence, but doing an injustice to the monarch and the people into whose land he was crossing.

Learn—1. How hard it is to lay aside one's besetting sin. The character of the patriarch, otherwise so noble, appears to have had a natural bias towards deception. 2. How difficult it is to lead a life of faith. One would have thought that by this time every vestige of carnal policy would have been eliminated from the walk of Abraham. 3. How possible it is for an eminent saint to relapse into great sin. If Abraham illustrated the virtues, he likewise remarkably exemplified the weaknesses of God's believing people. 4. How wrong it is to cherish and act upon uncharitable views of others. True religion always leans to the side of charity in judging of the characters of men.

II. THE SIN OF THE HEATHEN PRINCE. 1. A *common* sin. The popularity of an action, though not sufficient to make it good, may serve, in some degree, to extenuate its guilt where it is wrong. 2. An *unconscious* sin. The narrative distinctly represents Abimelech as a prince who feared God and shrank from incurring his displeasure—a character which all kings should study to possess. Abimelech himself claimed to have perpetrated no offence against the law of God in acting as he did, which shows that the voice of conscience always speaks according to its light. The avowal which he makes of his integrity is admitted by Jehovah as correct—a proof that God judges men according to their privileges. Yet it was—3. A *great* sin. Implied in the Divine direction to seek the friendly intercession of the patriarch, it was admitted by Abimelech when once his mind was enlightened as to the true character of the deed he had committed.

See here—1. A lesson of charity concerning peoples and individuals outside the visible Church. 2. A proof that men are not necessarily free from guilt because their consciences fail to accuse them. 3. A good sign of true contrition, viz., the acknowledgment of sin when it is pointed out.

III. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE PRINCE AND WITH THE PATRIARCH. 1. With the prince. (1) *Restraining* grace. God withheld him from proceeding to further sin by doing injury to Sarah, the means employed being disease which was sent upon both the monarch and his house. So God frequently interposes by afflictive dispensations to prevent those who fear him from running into sins of which perhaps they are not aware. (2) *Illuminating* grace. Appearing in a dream, Elohim disclosed the true character of his offence, and quickened his conscience to apprehend the guilt and danger which had been incurred. Sincere souls who fear God and are faithful to the light they have are never left to wander in darkness, but in God's time and way are mysteriously guided to the path of safety and duty (Ps. xxv. 12—14). (3) *Directing* grace. Finding the heathen monarch's heart susceptible of good impressions, God further counselled him how to act in order to obtain forgiveness, viz., to solicit the mediating services of Abraham, who in this matter was a type of heaven's great High Priest and Intercessor (Heb. vii. 25). Cf. God's way of dealing with erring men (Job xxxii. 14—33). 2. With the patriarch. (1) *Protection*. A second time he shielded his erring servant from the consequences of his own folly. A mark of God's tender pity towards sinful men. (2) *Reproof*. Besides being much needed, it was exceedingly severe, and must have been deeply humiliating. God often permits his people to be rebuked by the world for their good. (3) *Honour*. God is ever better to his people than their deserts. Not only did he direct Abimelech to ask the help of Abraham, but he constituted Abraham the medium of bestowing blessings on Abimelech. So does God honour Abraham's seed, Christ, by exalting him in the world's sight as the one Mediator between God and man; and Abraham's children, the Church, by making them the instruments of drawing down blessings on the world.

Learn—1. That God's dealings with sinning men ar always adapted to the peculiar characters of their respective sins. 2. That God never chastises men, either by affliction or rebuke, for his pleasure, but for their profit. 3. That God never pardons sin without bestowing blessing on the sinner.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 2.—*Falsehood the fruit of unbelief.* "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister." Notice how imperfectly the obligation of truth recognised in Old Testament times. Not only among heathen, or those who knew little of God (Josh. ii. 5; 2 Kings x. 18), but godly men among God's own people (ch. xxvi. 7; 1 Sam. xxvii. 10). Yet the excellence of truth was known, and its connection with the fear of God (Exod. xviii. 21; Ps. xv. 2). Not until manifested in Christ does truth seem to be fully understood (cf. John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 8). This gives force to "I am the truth." Some see in text an act of faith; trust that God would make the plan (ver. 13) successful. But faith must rest on God's word. Trust in what God gives no warrant for believing is not faith, but fancy, *e. g.* to attempt what we have no reason to believe we can accomplish, or to incur liabilities without reasonable prospect of meeting them. More natural and better to look on it as a breach of truth under temptation; the failure of a godly man under trial. His words were true in letter (ver. 12), but were spoken to deceive, and did deceive.

I. ROOT OF HIS FAULT—UNBELIEF; want of all-embracing trust. His faith was real and vigorous (cf. 1 Cor. x. 12), but partial (cf. ch. xxvii. 19; Matt. xiv. 28). Shrank from trusting God fully. Turned to human devices, and thus turned out of the way (Prov. iii. 5). Partial distrust may be found even where real faith. A very common instance is trusting in God for spiritual blessings only. A large part of our actions, especially in little things, springs not from conscious decision, but from habitual modes of thought and feeling. We act instinctively, according to what is the natural drift of thought. Abraham had so dwelt on the danger that he forgot the help at hand (Ps. xxxiv. 7; Rom. viii. 28). Bold in action, his faith failed when danger threatened. To endure is a greater trial of faith than to do. To stand firm amid secularising influences, ridicule, misconstruction is harder than to do some great thing. St. Peter was ready to fight for his Master, but failed to endure (Mark xiv. 50—71; Gal. ii. 12). So to St. Paul's "What wilt thou have me to do?" the Lord's word was, "I will show him how great things he must suffer."

II. FORM OF HIS FAULT—UNTRUTH. Contrary to the mind of Christ. May be without direct statement of untruth. May be by true words so used as to convey a wrong idea; by pretences, *e. g.* taking credit unduly for any possession or power; by being ashamed to admit our motives; or by untruth in the spiritual life, making unreal professions in prayer, or self-deceiving. Every day brings numberless trials. These can be resisted only by the habit of truthfulness, gained by cultivating "truth in the inward parts," aiming at entire truthfulness. Nothing unpractical in this. May be said, Must I tell all my thoughts to every one? Not so. Many things we have no right to speak; *e. g.* things told in confidence, or what would give unnecessary pain. Concealment when it is right is not untruth. No doubt questions of difficulty may arise. Hence rules of casuistry. But a Christian should be guided by principles rather than by rules (Gal. v. 1); and wisdom to apply these rightly is to be gained by studying the character of Christ, and prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance (Luke xi. 13; John xvi. 14).—M.

Vers. 15, 16.—*Abraham and Abimelech at Gerar.* I. THE UNIVERSALITY OF DIVINE GRACE. The varieties in moral state of nations a testimony to God's forbearing mercy. There was evidently a great contrast between such people as dwelt under Abimelech's rule and the cities of the plain, which helps us to see the extreme wickedness of the latter. It was probably no vain boast which the king uttered when he spoke of "*the integrity of his heart and innocency of his hands.*" Moreover, God *appeared* to him by dreams, and it is implied that he would have the greatest reverence for Jehovah's prophet. Abraham testified the same; although he declared that the fear of God was not in the place, still he sojourned in Gerar, and after Lot's experience he would not have done so unless he had believed it to be very different from Sodom.

II. THE CHARACTER OF GOD'S CHILDREN IS NOT THE GROUND OF THEIR ACCEPTANCE WITH HIM. It is strange that the Egyptian experience should not have taught the

patriarch simply to trust in God. But the *imperfect* faith *justifies*; the *grace of God* alone *sanctifies*. The conduct of Abimelech is throughout honourable and straightforward. Abraham's equivocation is not excusable. It sprang from fear, and it was no sudden error, but a deliberate policy which betokened weakness, to say the least.

III. The Lord brings good out of evil. Abimelech's character is a bright spot in the terrible picture of evil and its consequences. By the discipline of Providence the errors and follies of men are made the opportunities for learning God's purposes and character. The contact of the less enlightened with the more enlightened, though it may humble both, gives room for Divine teaching and gracious bestowments. Again we are reminded "the prayer of a righteous man availeth much" not because he is himself righteous, but because he is the channel of blessing to others, chosen of God's free grace.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1.—**And the Lord**—*Jehovah;* not because the verse is Jehovistic (Knobel, Bleek, *et alii*), but because the promise naturally falls to be implemented by him who gave it (*vide* ch. xviii. 10)—**visited**—remembered with love (Onkelos), ἐπεσκέψατο (LXX.; cf. ch. l. 24; Exod. iv. 31; 1 Sam. ii. 21; Isa. xxiii. 17); though it sometimes means to approach in judgment (*vide* Exod. xx. 5; xxxii. 34). Alleged to be peculiar to the Jehovist (the term used by the Elohist being זָכַר: ch. viii. 1; xix. 29; xxx. 20), the word occurs in ch. l. 24, which Tuch and Bleek ascribe to the Elohist—**Sarah as he had said** (ch. xvii. 21; xviii. 10, 14),—God's word of promise being ever the rule of his performance (cf. Exod. xii. 25; Luke i. 72)—**and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken**—*i. e.* implemented his promise; the proof of which is next given (cf. Numb. xxiii. 19; Heb. vi. 18).

Ver. 2.—**For Sarah conceived,**—through faith receiving strength from God for that purpose (Heb. xi. 11); the fruit of the womb, in every instance God's handiwork (Isa. xliv. 2), being in her case a special gift of grace and product of Divine power—**and bare**—the usual construction (ch. xxix. 32; xxx. 5) is here somewhat modified by the Jehovist (Kalisch); but the clause may be compared with ch. xxx. 22, 23, commonly assigned to the Elohist—**Abraham** (literally, *to Abraham*) **a son in his old age,**—literally, *to his old age;* εἰς τὸ γῆρας (LXX.)—**at the set time** (*vide* ch. xvii. 21; xviii. 10, 14) **of which God had spoken to him.** God's word gave Abraham strength to beget, Sarah to conceive, and Isaac to come forth. Three times repeated in two verses, the clause points to the supernatural character of Isaac's birth.

Ver. 3.—**And Abraham called the name of his son**—the naming of a child by its father is, according to partitionists, a peculiarity of the Elohist as distinguished from the Jehovist, who assigns that function to the mother; but *vide* ch. xvi. 15—**that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him** (the latter clause being added to distinguish him from Hagar's child), **Isaac**—*laughter;* the name appointed for him by God before his birth (ch. xvii. 19).

Ver. 4.—**And Abraham circumcised** (*vide* on ch. xvii. 11, and note at the end of that chapter) **his son Isaac being eight days old** (literally, *a son of eight days*), **as** (not only because, but in the manner in which) **God had commanded him.**

Ver. 5.—**And Abraham was an hundred years old** (cf. ch. xvii. 1, 17), **when his son Isaac was born unto him.** Literally, *at the time of bearing to him* (ἐν τῷ τεκεῖν) *Isaac* (*vide* Gesenius, 'Gram.,' § 143). Thus Abraham had waited twenty-five years for the fulfilment of the promise—a remarkable instance of faith and patience (Rom. iv. 20), as Isaac's birth was a signal display of Divine power (Rom. iv. 17; Heb. xi. 12). Whether Isaac was born at Gerar or at Beersheba cannot with certitude be inferred.

Ver. 6.—**And Sarah said,**—the spiritual elevation of her soul being indicated by the poetical form of her speech. Differing from Mary's magnificat in having been uttered after, and not before, the birth of the promised seed, the anthem of Sarah was obviously designed as a prelude to that loftier song of the Virgin (cf. Luke i. 46). It consists of two sentences, the first containing two, and the second three lines—**God hath made me to laugh.** Or, retaining the order of the Hebrew, *To laugh hath made me Elohim;* the emphatic position of צחק, containing an allusion to the name Isaac, probably indicating that Sarah's laughter was of a different character now from what it had previously been (ch. xviii. 12); and her ascription of it to Elohim intimating that him whom she formerly mistook for a traveller she now recognised to be Divine ('Speaker's Commentary'). So that

all that hear me will laugh with me. Not, will laugh at me, *deridebit me* (Poole), a sense the words will bear (Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though in the instances adduced (Job v. 22; xxxix. 7, 18, 22) צָחַק לְ rather conveys the idea of despising difficulties (Kalisch); but, will laugh with me, *συγχαρεῖταί μοι*, *congaudebit mihi* (LXX., Vulgate, Targums, Calvin, Dathe, Keil).

Ver. 7.—**And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham,**—מִלֵּל, the poetic word for דִּבֵּר, is introduced by מִי in order to express astonishment; the meaning being that what had happened was altogether out of the ordinary course of nature, was, in fact, God's work alone (Vatablus, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Less happy are *τίς ἀναγγελεῖ τῷ Ἀβραάμ* (LXX.); *quis auditurum crederet Abraham quod* (Vulgate); *quam fidelis est ille qui dixit Abrahamo* (Onkelos)—**that Sarah should have given children suck?** Literally, *Sarah suckleth sons*. "Many of the greatest saints in Holy Scripture, and even our Lord himself, were nursed by their own mothers" (Wordsworth). **For I have born him a son in his old age.** Literally, *I have born a son to his old age.* The LXX. incorrectly render *ἐν τῷ γήρᾳ μου.*

Ver. 8.—**And the child grew,**—*καὶ ηὐξήθη τὸ παιδίον* (LXX.): imitated by Luke concerning Christ: *τὸ παιδίον ηὔξανε* (Luke ii. 40)—**and was weaned.** The verb *gamal* originally signifies to do good to any one, to do completely; hence to finish, or make completely ready, as an infant; hence to wean, since either at that time the period of infancy is regarded as complete, or the child's independent existence is then fully reached. The time of weaning is commonly believed to have been at the end of the second or third year (cf. 1 Sam. i. 22—24; 2 Chron. xxxi. 16; 2 Macc. vii. 27; Josephus, 'Ant.,' ii. 9, 6). **And Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.** Literally, *in the day of the weaning of Isaac;* probably, therefore, when Isaac was three years old and Ishmael seventeen. "It is still customary in the East to have a festive gathering at the time a child is weaned. Among the Hindoos, when the time for weaning has come, the event is accompanied with feasting and religious ceremonies, during which rice is formally presented to the child" ('Bible Manners and Customs,' by Rev. J. A. Freeman, M.A., 'Homiletical Quarterly,' vol. i. p. 78; cf. Roberts' 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 24).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—8.—*The son of promise, or a young child's biography.* I. THE BIRTH OF ISAAC. 1. *A surprising phenomenon.* "Who would have said that Sarah should have suckled sons?" Motherhood at ninety was certainly unusual, especially when conjoined with paternity at a hundred. In a world presided over by a personal Deity there must always be room for surprises. 2. *A miraculous production.* That the conception and birth of Isaac were due to Divine interposition—that, in fact, the child of promise was a special supernatural creation—is asserted by Paul as well as Moses (Rom. iv. 17). 3. *An accomplished prediction.* Not only the fact of Isaac's birth, but the exact time was specified beforehand. And now the long-looked-for child had arrived. A signal proof of the Divine veracity, it was another pledge to God's people in every age of the Divine fidelity in implementing his gracious word of promise. 4. *A joyous inspiration.* Isaac's birth not simply woke laughing echoes in Sarah's tent, but opened founts of song in Sarah's breast; which was not wonderful, considering that the tender infant over which she exulted was the child of her own and Abraham's old age, the child of promise, the fruit of faith and the gift of grace, and the Heaven-appointed heir of the covenant blessing. 5. *A prophetic intimation.* Sarah's anthem contained a higher note of melody than that occasioned by a mother's joy; there was in it too the gladness of a faith that saw in Isaac the harbinger and pledge of another and greater Seed. Like the birth of Isaac, that of Christ was fore-announced by God, waited for in faith, accomplished through Divine power, and welcomed with bursts of joy.

II. THE CIRCUMCISION OF ISAAC. 1. The *import* of the rite (see on ch. xvii. 10). It implied the formal reception of the party upon whom it was imposed within the pale of the Old Testament Church; it signified the putting away of the filth of the flesh; it took the subject of it bound to a holy life. Of a like import is the Christian sacrament of baptism, which, however, differs from the Hebrew rite in looking back upon a Christ already manifested, instead of forward to a Christ that was still to

come. 2. The *authority* for the rite. This was exclusively the Divine commandment — the sole reason that can be assigned for the observance of the Christian sacraments, which in themselves are only symbols of spiritual transactions, and have no validity apart from the appointment of Christ. 3. The *index* to the rite. This was contained in the name generally given on the occasion of its observance: cf. Abraham (ch. xvii. 5), John the Baptist (Luke i. 60), Jesus (Luke ii. 21). With this ancient custom must be connected the Christian practice of naming children at baptism.

III. THE WEANING OF ISAAC. 1. *A mother's duty fulfilled.* The first duty of a mother is to her babe, and to withhold the sustenance God has provided for her babe's necessities is both to violate Divine law and to perpetrate a fraud upon her helpless offspring. Sarah, though a princess, was not above discharging the duties of a nurse—an example which Sarah's daughters should diligently follow. 2. *A child's independence begun.* From the moment of weaning a child may be said to enter on a separate and as it were independent existence, attaining then for the first time to a distinct individuality of being. 3. *A father's joy expressed.* The interesting event was celebrated by a festal entertainment, at which, if not Shem, Melchisedek, and Selah, according to the Rabbis, the inmates of Abraham's household were doubtless present. "God's blessing upon the nursing of children, and his preservation of them during the perils of infant age, are signal instances of the care and tenderness of Divine providence, which ought to be acknowledged to its praise" (Henry).

Lessons:—1. The right of parents to rejoice in their children. 2. The duty of parents to introduce their children to the Church of God. 3. The propriety of parents recognising the separate individualities of children.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—8.—*Birth, circumcision, and weaning of Isaac.* Here is—

I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF JEHOVAH. "As he had spoken." "At the set time." "God hath made me to laugh."

II. THE FAITH OF HIS SERVANT, which was evidenced in waiting, hoping, naming the son born unto him, obeying the commandment.

III. THE GIFT of God was THE REVELATION of God: his love, his power, his purpose, his patience.

IV. Taken TYPICALLY, the foreshadowing of the miraculous conception, the kingdom of God, as originating in the sphere of human infirmity and helplessness; as being the introduction of bright hope and cheerful promise into the gloomy barrenness of human life; as the lifting up of man's state into the covenant of God, sealed with his appointed ordinance, surrounded with the promised blessings. Isaac was the type of Christ, Sarah of Mary, Abraham of the people and Church of God.

V. SARAH'S SONG, the first cradle hymn of a mother's thankful joy, representing the Divine delight in the pure and simple happiness of those who are children of God. Abraham rejoiced to see the brightness of the future (John viii. 56).

VI. THE WEANING FEAST. All called in to share in the joy. Household joy should be widespread. We may suppose that such a banquet was religious in its character. If so, not only is it a sanction of religious festivals, but it reminds us that we should connect the events of the family life immediately with the word and ordinances of God.—R.

Vers. 8—21.—*The separation of the bondwoman's son from the promised seed.* It was necessary that this should take place for the accomplishment of the Divine plan. Human conduct is employed, as in so many other cases, as the instrument or occasion. There was mockery or unbelief in Ishmael. It was not personal merely, but a mockery of Jehovah and of his Church. Sarah saw it. The mother's keen affections were sharpened to detect the scorn of her joy. Abraham and Sarah were both severely tried. Their lack of faith must yield fruit of sorrow. The separation was pain to the father, but it was part of the gracious work of God for Isaac. Abraham

was being prepared by such discipline for his great climax of trial. There is beautiful tenderness and simplicity in Abraham's conduct (ver. 14). It is—1. Entire obedience. 2. Kind and gentle consideration for Sarah and Hagar. 3. Strong faith: he committed her to God according to his word. 4. The master and the servant at the door of the house in the early morning; the master himself placing the bottle of water on the bondwoman's shoulder as a sign of continued affinity. God commands separations. In obedience to him they may involve severe struggle with self. Should still be carried out with as little wounding of human affections as possible.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 9.—**And Sarah saw**—at the feast already mentioned (Knobel, Keil); probably also on different occasions since the birth of Isaac—**the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.** Παίζοντα μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς (LXX.), *ludentem cum Isaaco filio suo* (Vulgate), playing like a child (Aben Ezra, Knobel, Tuch, Ilgen), playing and dancing gracefully (Gesenius); but the stronger sense of the word, implying mockery, scoffing, irritating and deriding laughter (Kimchi, Vatablus, Grotius, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy), besides being admissible (cf. ch. xix. 14; xxvi. 8; xxxix. 14, 17; Exod. xxxii. 6), seems involved in the Piel form of the participle מְצַחֵק (Kurtz), and is demanded by Gal. iv. 29. That Ishmael ridiculed the banquet on the occasion of Isaac's weaning (Malvenda), quarrelled with him about the heirship (Fagius, Piscator), and perhaps made sport of him as a father of nations (Hengstenberg), though plausible conjectures, are not stated in the text. Ainsworth dates from this event the 400 years of Israel's oppression (*vide* ch. xv. 13).

Ver. 10.—**Wherefore she said**—though with an admixture of sinful feelings, *non dubito arcano Spiritus instinctu gubernatam fuisse ejus linguam et mentem* (Calvin); *vide* Gal. iv. 30—**unto Abraham, Cast out**—by some kind of legal act (as divorce: cf. Levit. xxi. 7, 14; xxii. 13; Isa. lvii. 20), which should insure the disinheriting of Ishmael (Bush); though probably this is to import later Mosaic legislation into the records of primitive times—**this bondwoman**—a term ill befitting Sarah, who had given Hagar to her husband as a wife (ch. xvi. 3)—**and her son** (who was Abraham's offspring, though not the promised seed; a consideration which should have mitigated Sarah's anger): **for the son of this bondwoman** (a repetition evincing the bitterness of her contempt and the intensity of her choler) **shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.** Notwithstanding the assurance (ch. xvii. 21) that the covenant was made with Isaac, Sarah was apprehensive lest Ishmael should contrive to disinherit him; an act of unbelief into which she was manifestly betrayed by her maternal fears and womanly jealousy.

Ver. 11.—**And the thing** (literally, *the word*, i. e. Sarah's proposal) **was very grievous** (literally, *evil exceedingly;* for the contrary phrase *vide* ch. xx. 15) **in Abraham's sight** (literally, *in the eyes of* Abraham) **because of his son**—who, besides being bound to him by the ties of natural affection, had for years been regarded as the Heaven-appointed heir of the promise (*vide* ch. xvii. 18).

Ver. 12.—**And God said unto Abraham,**—probably in a dream, or night vision (*vide* ver. 14)—**Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman;**—who was never recognised by God as Abraham's wife (cf. ch. xvi. 8)—**in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice.** Though Sarah's counsel was approved by God, it does not follow that her conduct was. On a former occasion Abraham's hearkening unto Sarah's voice had led to sin (ch. xvi. 2); this time it would lie exactly in the line of duty. **For in Isaac shall thy seed be called.** Literally, *in Isaac shall seed* (i. e. posterity) *be called to thee;* meaning neither, "by Isaac shall thy seed be called, or named" (Hofmann, Kalisch, Ainsworth), nor, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called into existence" (Dreschler); but, "in Isaac shall there be posterity to thee which shall pass as such," *i. e.* be called or recognised as such (Keil); or, more simply, "in Isaac," *i. e.* in the line of Isaac, "shall be called to thee a seed," *i. e.* a seed *par excellence*, the seed already promised (Bleek, Delitzsch, Rosenmüller, Alford, Murphy).

Ver. 13.—**And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation.** Literally, *to a nation I will set or put him;* a promise already given (ch. xvii. 20), but here repeated to render Ishmael's dismissal easier. **Because he is thy seed.** "Thy son according to the flesh, though not after the promise, as Isaac was" (Ainsworth); a proof that men may sometimes receive mercies for their fathers' sakes.

Ver. 14.—**And Abraham rose up early in the morning,**—hastening to put in force the Divine instructions (cf. ch. xix. 27; xxii. 3,

Abraham; ch. xx. 8, Abimelech; ch. xxviii. 18, Jacob)—**and took bread, and a bottle of water,**—the bottle, from a root signifying to enclose (Fürst); ἀσκόν (LXX.), was composed of skin, the material of which the earliest carrying vessels were constructed (cf. Josh. ix. 4, 13; Judges iv. 19; 1 Sam. xvi. 20; Matt. ix. 17). "The monuments of Egypt, the sculptures of Mesopotamia, and the relics of Herculaneum and Pompeii afford ample opportunities to learn the shape and use of every variety of bottles, often surprising us both by their elegance and costliness" (Kalisch)—**and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder,**—the usual place for carrying such vessels among Oriental women. According to Herodotus (ii. 35), Egyptian women carried burdens on their shoulders, Egyptian men upon their heads—**and the child,**—not placing the child, now a youth of over seventeen years, upon her shoulder (LXX., Schumann, Bohlen); but giving him, along with the bottle (Hävernick, Kalisch, À Lapide, Ainsworth), or, as well as the bread (Keil, Murphy), to Hagar, not to be carried as a burden, but led as a companion—**and sent her away:**—divorced her by the command of God (À Lapide); but as Hagar was never recognised by God as Abraham's wife, her sending away was not a case of divorce (Wordsworth)—**and she departed** (from Beer-sheba, whither Abraham had by this time removed, and where, in all probability, Isaac had been born), **and wandered**—*i. e.* lost her way (cf. ch. xxxvii. 15)—**in the wilderness** (the uncultivated waste between Palestine and Egypt) **of Beer-sheba**—introduced here by anticipation, unless the incident in vers. 22—33 had previously taken place (*vide* on ver. 31).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 9—14.—*The expulsion of Ishmael.* I. THE CAUSE. 1. *The persecution of Isaac.* "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian mocking." That this was no mere sportive pleasantry may be inferred from the deep feeling it aroused in Sarah, the summary chastisement it brought on Ishmael, and the severe language in which it is characterised by Paul. The emphasis laid by Sarah on the heirship suggests the probability that Ishmael's offence partook of the nature of wicked, irritating laughter at the position and prospects of Sarah's son, springing partly from envy and partly from unbelief. 2. *The apprehensions of Sarah.* That Sarah was actuated by personal dislike of Hagar's boy, or inspired solely by maternal jealousy, is a gratuitous assumption. It is more satisfactory to ascribe her seemingly harsh counsel to the clearness with which she recognised that Isaac alone was the Heaven-appointed heir, and that nothing must be allowed to either damage his position or endanger his prospects. 3. *The commandment of God.* Considering the patriarch's former experience of "hearkening to Sarah," his acquiescence in her counsel on this occasion would in all probability have been problematical, had not God interposed to recommend its adoption. It would both secure the happiness of Isaac and remove temptation from the path of Ishmael; while it would serve to educate the patriarch himself for the coming sacrifice on Mount Moriah. To facilitate the patriarch's compliance with the Divine injunction, the promise of future greatness to Ishmael is renewed, and in the end Hagar and her boy are dismissed.

II. THE MANNER. 1. With *pain to himself.* "The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son." Parental affection must have urged him to retain his first-born son. Conjugal love must have interceded for her who had been to him as a wife. Self-interest may have represented the advisability of still clinging to Ishmael for the fulfilment of the promise, in case the line of Isaac should fail. Yet grace and faith triumphed. "All things are possible to him that believeth." 2. With *tenderness towards the outcasts.* Making provision for their immediate necessities, and either then or afterwards adding gifts (ch. xxv. 6), he sends them away, doubtless with many prayers and tears. Nature and grace both enjoin tenderness in dealing with those whom God in his providence calls to suffer. 3. With *submission to the will of God.* The moment the mind of God was ascertained, internal controversy ceased and determined. The patriarch was never irresolute in following when God led. Obedience is the first duty of faith.

III. THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE. 1. *Ishmael and Isaac* representatives of Abraham's natural descendants and Abraham's spiritual posterity; Israel after the flesh and Israel after the spirit; souls in legal bondage and souls enjoying spiritual freedom. 2. *Ishmael's mockery of Isaac* foreshadowed the persecuting spirit of the

unbelieving Jews, who adhered to the system of Moses, towards the disciples of the New Testament faith, who sought salvation through Christ; hence also the antagonism of the sinful principle in man to the renewed life of grace. 3. *Ishmael's separation from Isaac* prefigured the ultimate removal of unbelievers from believers, of the world from the Church, of those in a state of nature or of legal bondage from those who are children of the promise and of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Learn—1. The wickedness and danger of mocking at sacred persons and things. 2. The superior spiritual insight not unfrequently exhibited by woman. 3. The necessity of trying all human opinions by God's revealed will. 4. The care God takes to guide sincere souls as to the path of duty. 5. The proper function of faith, which is to hear and obey. 6. The impossibility of any compromise existing between the world and the Church. 7. The final casting out of the wicked from the congregation of the righteous.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 15.—**And the water was spent in** (literally, *from*) **the bottle,**—so that the wanderers became exhausted, and were in danger of fainting through thirst—**and she cast the child**—a translation which certainly conveys an erroneous impression, first of Ishmael, who was not an infant, but a grown lad (*vide supra*, ver. 14), and secondly of Ishmael's mother, whom it represents as acting with violence, if not with inhumanity; whereas the sense probably is that, having, as long as her rapidly diminishing strength permitted, supported her fainting son, she at length suddenly, through feebleness, released his nerveless hand as he fell, and in despair, finding herself unable to give him further assistance, left him, as she believed, to die where he had flung himself in his intolerable anguish—**under one of the shrubs.**

Ver. 16.—**And she went, and sat her down**—וַתֵּשֶׁב לָהּ, the pronoun being added to the verb, as an ethical dative, to indicate that the action was of special importance to her, meaning, "she, for herself, or for her part, sat down" (*vide* Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 315, *a.*; and Glass, 'Phil. Tract.,' l. iii. tr. ii. c. 6; and cf. Gen. xii. 1; xxii. 5)—**over against** him **a good way off.** The hiph. inf. of רָחַק, to go far away, to recede from any one, is here used adverbially, as in Josh. iii. 16 (Gesenius, Fürst, Kalisch), though by others it is understood as explaining the action of the previous verbs, and as equivalent to a gerund in *do*, or a participle, *elongando se* (Rosenmüller), or simply "removing to a distance" (Ewald; *vide* 'Heb. Synt.,' § 280 *a.*). **As it were a bowshot.** Literally, *as those who draw the bow*, i. e. as far off as archers are accustomed to place the target (Keil). The sense is correctly given by the LXX.: μακρόθεν, ὡσεὶ τόξου βολήν. **For she said, Let me not see**—*i. e.* look upon with anguish (cf. Num. xi. 15)—**the death of the child**—τοῦ παιδίου μου (LXX.). **And she sat over against** him, **and lift up her voice, and wept.** The verbs, being feminine, indicate that it is Hagar's grief which is here described, and that the rendering, "and the child lifted up his voice and wept" (LXX.), is incorrect; although the next verse may suggest that Ishmael, like his mother, was also dissolved in tears.

Ver. 17.—**And God**—*Elohim;* Hagar and Ishmael having now been removed from the care and superintendence of the covenant God to the guidance and providence of God the ruler of all nations (Keil)—**heard the voice of the lad;**—praying (Inglis), or weeping, *ut supra*—**and the angel of God**—*Maleach Elohim;* not *Maleach Jehovah*, as in ch. xvi. 7—13, for the reason above specified (Hengstenberg, Quarry)—**called to Hagar out of heaven,**—it may be inferred there was no external appearance or *theophaneia*, such as was vouchsafed to her when wandering in the wilderness of Shur (ch. xvi. 7)—**and said unto her, What aileth thee** (literally, *What to thee?*) **Hagar? fear not;**—so the word of Jehovah addressed Abram (ch. xv. 1), Isaac (ch. xxvi. 4), Daniel (Dan. x. 12), and John (Rev. i. 17)—**for God hath heard the voice of the lad**—*i. e.* the voice (perhaps the mute cry) of the lad's misery, and in that also the audible sob of Hagar's weeping. It is not said that either Ishmael or his mother prayed to God in their distress. Hence the Divine interposition on their behalf *non quid a se peterent, sed quid servo suo Abrahae de Ismaele pollicitus foret, respexit* (Calvin)—**where he is**—an ellipsis for from, or in, the place where he is; ἐκ τοῦ τόπου οὗ ἐστιν (LXX.); *ex loco ubi est* (Calvin); meaning either "in his helpless condition" (Keil), or out in the desolate wilderness, as contrasted with the house of Abraham (Calvin).

Ver. 18.—**Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand.** Literally, *bind fast thy hand to him*, i. e. give him thy support now, and take care of him till he reaches manhood. Cf. God's promise to Israel (Isa. xlii.

6). **For I will make him** (literally, *to*) **a great nation** (*vide* ver. 13; and cf. ch. xvi. 10; xvii. 20).

Ver. 19.—**And God opened her eyes.** Not necessarily by miraculous operation; perhaps simply by providentially guiding her search for water, after the administered consolation had revived her spirit and roused her energies. **And she saw a well of water.** מַיִם בְּאֵר, as distinguished from בּוֹר, a pit or cistern, meant a fountain or spring of living water (cf. ch. xxiv. 11, 20; xxvi. 19, 20, 21). It had not been previously observed by Hagar, either because of her mental agitation (*dolore quasi cæca*, Rosenmüller), or because, as was customary, the mouth of the well was covered—**and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink**—which was certainly the first of the youth's necessities, being needful to the preservation of his life and the reviving of his spirits.

Vers. 20, 21.—**And God was with the lad.** Not simply in the ordinary sense in which he is with all men (Ps. cxxxix. 3—9; Acts xvii. 27, 28); not, certainly, in the spiritual sense in which he had promised to be with Isaac (ch. xvii. 21), and in which he is with believers (ch. xxvi. 24; Isa. xli. 10; Matt. xxviii. 20); but in the particular sense of exercising towards him a special providence, with a view to implementing the promise made concerning him to Abraham and Hagar. **And he grew** (literally, *became great*, i. e. progressed towards manhood), **and dwelt in the wilderness** (*i. e.* led a roving and unsettled life), **and became an archer.** Literally, *and he was* רֹבֶה קַשָּׁת; *i. e.* deriving רֹבֶה from רָבָה, to grow great or multiply, either (1) when he grew up, an archer, or man using the bow (Gesenius, Keil); (2) growing an archer, or acquiring skill as a bowman (Kalisch, Wordsworth); or (3) growing, or multiplying into, a tribe of archers (Murphy). With the first of these substantially agree the renderings *καὶ ἐγένετο τοξότης* (LXX.), and *factus est juvenis sagittarius* (Vulgate). Others, connecting רֹבֶה with רָבַב, in the sense of to cast arrows (cf. ch. xlix. 23), read, (1) "and he was a shooter of arrows from the bow" (Jarchi, Kimchi, Rosenmüller), though in this case קַשָּׁת would have to be read for קֶשֶׁת (Fürst); (2) a marksman, archer, *i. e.* a marksman skilled in using the bow (Ewald, *vide* 'Heb. Synt.,' § 287). Baumgarten translates, a hero (or great one), an archer. **And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran**:—the desert of *El-Tih*, on the south of Canaan (cf. ch. xiv. 6)—**and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt** (cf. ch. xxiv. 4, 55; Exod. xxi. 10).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 15—21.—*Hagar and Ishmael, or the fortunes of the outcasts.* I. THE LONELY WANDERERS. 1. *Banished from home.* Hitherto the household of Abraham had been to Hagar and her boy such a pleasant and doubtless much-prized abode; henceforth their connection with the patriarch's encampment was to be completely severed. So God in his mysterious providence and in many different ways frequently bereaves men of the shelter and society of home. 2. *Separated from the Church.* Practically the expulsion of this Egyptian slave-mother and her son from the household of Abraham, if it did not involve a casting off from God's mercy, amounted to extrusion from the patriarchal Church. 3. *Lost in the wilderness.* Whether because the region through which they travelled was unfamiliar, or because, impelled by indignation and excitement, they simply drifted on with aimless feet, the narrative depicts the unhappy pair as having "wandered," turned aside into unfrequented paths, and become lost; in that touchingly portraying the sad condition of thousands of homeless and churchless wanderers to-day, roaming purposeless and perplexed across the trackless waste of life.

II. THE FAINTING YOUTH. 1. *Perishing through thirst.* Extreme thirst one of the most excruciating torments to which the physical frame can be subjected, and a fellow-creature dying for lack of water, one of the commonest of God's mercies, as sad a spectacle as any on which the eye of man can gaze. 2. *Sobbing in anguish.* Too exhausted to weep aloud, the poor disheartened lad moans out his misery. Happy they who, if they cannot relieve, can at least understand and be affected by their necessities. To recognise and make complaint of one's spiritual destitution is better than to be callous and indifferent to one's dying condition. 3. *Praying to God.* Though not certain that the "voice" of the lad meant more than the rude cry of his distress, charity may hope that in the day of his calamity he directed his prayer to God. Prayer generally precedes deliverance.

III. THE WEEPING MOTHER. 1. *The voice of heathen superstition.* "Let me not see the death of the lad." To a Christian mother Hagar's behaviour is simply inexplicable. It is doubtful if Sarah would have been a bow-shot removed from Isaac had he been expiring. But then Hagar, though she had been Abraham's wife, was still a poor untutored slave-girl. It may assist us to understand our indebtedness to the humanising influences of Christ's religion. 2. *The cry of maternal affection.* "She sat over against her boy, and lifted up her voice and wept." Even in the breast of this Egyptian bondmaid nature asserted her supremacy. Everywhere beautiful and sacred is a mother's love, worthy of being cherished and reciprocated by those who know its sweetness and strength, never failing to bring down retribution on those by whom it is rejected and despised.

IV. THE COMFORTING GOD. 1. *Sympathising with the sorrowful.* "What aileth thee, Hagar?" What a glimpse into the infinite pitifulness of the Divine nature! Only when Christ came was it surpassed in clearness and fulness. 2. *Listening to the suppliant.* As the prayer of Ishmael came up into the wakeful ear of God, so the cries of dying men and perishing souls never fail to do. 3. *Consoling the dejected.* As to Hagar the angel spoke words of encouragement, and renewed the formerly-given assurance concerning the future greatness of her son, so God revives the drooping spirits of his people by directing them to his exceeding great and precious promises. 4. *Providing for the destitute.* "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." And so by the leadings of his providence, the teachings of his word, and the illumination of his Spirit does God guide the meek to the wells of salvation. 5. *Abiding with the homeless.* "God was with the lad." Ejected from Abraham's house, he was not deserted by Abraham's God. Happy they who amid life's wanderings can count on God's companionship. For desertions of friends and deprivations of goods it will prove ample compensation.

Learn—1. To prize the blessing of a home and the privilege of a Church. 2. To commiserate and succour those who have neither. 3. To use God in all the revealed aspects of his gracious character.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 17.—*Hagar, a weary outcast.* "What aileth thee, Hagar?" Hagar is sent away from Abraham's tents. In the wilderness wandering she is lost. In despair she sinks down and weeps. An angel's voice is heard inquiring, "What aileth thee, Hagar?"

I. HAGAR MAY BE TAKEN AS REPRESENTING THE SOULS STILL CHRISTLESS. They are—1. Weary. 2. Thirsty. 3. Apparently man-forsaken and God-forsaken. 4. Their dearest comforts slipping from them, as Hagar's child, by death. 5. Death expecting.

II. HAGAR'S ACT INDICATES HOW SUCH SOULS SHOULD ACT IN TROUBLE. 1. Realise it. 2. Seek deliverance from above. God nearer to us than we imagine. He feels for us, hears us, helps us. He gives sustenance, cheer, guidance.—H.

Vers. 17—19.—*God's appearance to Hagar.* The greatest truths in the Bible put before us in a setting of human interest and feeling. Our hearts strangely touched by the picture of the desolate woman and the helpless child. The fatherly character of God exhibited. He heard the voice of the lad. All such facts point to the greatest fact, the union of God and man in the man Christ Jesus. We see here—

I. GOD'S NOTICE OF AND COMPASSION FOR HUMAN SUFFERING: our example. The object of pity apart from antecedents.

II. THE WORKING OUT OF DIVINE PURPOSES notwithstanding, and to some extent by means of, human infirmities, errors, and sins. Ishmael must be preserved, and has his part to play in the future.

III. Taken TYPICALLY, Hagar and Ishmael represent the life of man apart from the covenant of God, outside the circle of special privilege. There is God in the wilderness. The eyes which are darkened with ignorance and self-will may yet be mercifully opened to see the well of water. The angel of deliverance follows even the bondwoman and her son. But the way to God through the wilderness is a hard way, a way of suffering, a way of danger. God was with Ishmael. He was with

him through Abraham, for Abraham's sake. The course of Ishmael's life illustrates the contrast between a truly religious career and one given up to natural impulse. Cf. Esau and Joseph's brethren.—R.

Ver. 19.—*Hagar in the wilderness.* "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." Hagar in the wilderness. Why? She had no pleasure in her home; would not accept her position there. Hence Ishmael's mocking. Compare working of pride in Eden—"Ye shall be as gods;" and its result—Adam and Eve driven out. Observe—a soul despising the position of a child of God is driven into the wilderness by its own act. Pride rebels against terms of salvation (Rom. x. 3)—a free gift to sinners seeking it as such (Mark ii. 17). Hagar felt her misery, like many who find no peace. "All is vanity." She sat down and wept. Did she cry to God? He had met her there before. Past mercies should move to trust (Ps. xlii. 6). But pride and unbelief hinder prayer (Exod. xvii. 3—6). But God had not forgotten her (cf. Matt. xviii. 11). "What aileth thee?" Compare our Lord's dealing with those he helped. 1. Himself taking the first step. 2. Requiring a confession of their want. 3. Rousing expectation (John iv. 14; vii. 37).

I. THE WELL WAS NEAR HER, BUT SHE SAW IT NOT. So is it with the water of life. Why are so many without peace? The well is beside them; the sound of the gospel is familiar to them. The Bible is read in their hearing, but it speaks nothing to them (2 Cor. iii. 15). Christ died for all (2 Cor. v. 14). His blood the ransom for all (1 John i. 7). We have not to go to seek a Saviour (Rom. x. 6—8). No sin too deep for cleansing, no sorrow too great for comfort; nothing required to give a right to trust him (Isa. lv. 1; Luke xv. 2). Why without peace? The eyes are closed to the truth (1 Cor. ii. 14). Human teaching cannot give life (Ezek. xxxvii. 8). What is wanted is not a new fountain, but opened eyes. And it is disbelief of this that keeps so many in anxiety. To them the well is not there; they want God to give it. They look for something they are to do to find a Saviour. Important to know what is wanted—spiritual discernment. To many this seems a mere fancy; but they whose eyes are opened know it to be a passing from darkness to light (cf. 2 Tim. i. 10). Words often read become full of new meaning.

II. GOD OPENED HER EYES. It is blindness that causes trouble; but as blind cannot see by his own will, so neither can the unspiritual. The way of salvation is before him, but while it commends itself to his reason it brings him no joy. Are we then without effort to sit still? No; all is ready on God's part. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Want of will alone hinders. Often men would like to drink, but not at God's fountain. Make an effort to believe, and power will be given.

III. WHAT SHE SAW. The well of life; the revelation of Jesus Christ to the soul—this is peace. Not our own powers or wisdom, not our own holiness or advance in grace; but trust in him. No more fears. True, the wilderness is there; the work has to be done, temptations overcome, sorrows borne, graces cultivated; but we can do all through Christ. Now troubles become helps (Ps. lxxxiv. 6), for they make us flee to Christ (2 Cor. xii. 9). And who can count the blessings revealed to him whose eyes are opened? A Father in everything—protection, teaching, guidance. Everything surrounding him, every event that happens to him, are inlets of ever-increasing knowledge of God, whom to know is life eternal.—M.

Ver. 20.—*God's care for Ishmael.* "And God was with the lad." The encampment of Abraham was the scene of joy and festivity on the occasion of the recognition of Isaac publicly as his heir. It is said in Jewish lore that Abraham called a number of the patriarchs to the feast, and that Melchizedek, Nahor, and even Noah were present. Ishmael had been heir-presumptive up to that time. He was then put in the position of a subject to the son of Sarah. He and his mother despised the weakling and nursling. They "mocked." This roused the indignation of Sarah, and she insisted on the banishment of both. Abraham was very unwilling to consent to the proposal, for he had great affection for Ishmael. No wonder that he loved him, for he was, if not the child of promise, at least the son who first roused in his breast the pride and joy of paternity. He seems to have hoped that Ishmael would be the one through whom the great blessings promised to him would be bestowed.

Hence he had prayed, "O that Ishmael might live before thee" (ch. xvii. 18). Perhaps unbelief had much to do with the expression of the hope. He indicated his own contentment with that mode of fulfilment of the promises; God, however, has another. Abraham evidently loved the lad, and now that he is grown to be a stalwart youth of about sixteen, it is strongly against his inclination to send him away. Sarah insists. She in her indignation will not even speak of him by his name, but calls him contemptuously "the son of this bondwoman" (ch. xxi. 10). Abraham was very grieved (ver. 11), but he can see that there is no prospect of any peace in his encampment unless he should do as Sarah wishes. Two jealous women are enough to embitter his life, and bring discord eventually among his retainers. For typical reasons the banishment was permitted by God (ver. 12), and Abraham sends both away, laden probably not only with trinkets, which shall suffice for barter, but with a flask of water and strings of small loaves. Abraham had thus to sacrifice his own inclinations in Ishmael, his son after the flesh, as afterwards his will in offering up Isaac, his child of promise. Away towards Egypt Hagar and Ishmael travel. They enter the wilderness of Beersheba. Happiness and home is behind; desolateness, dreariness, lonely journeyings, imminent dangers from the wild beasts and fierce hordes of men, with Egypt, before them. Hagar, with bread dry and water spent, losing her way, waits for some one to guide. Unable to proceed, she and her son sink down to die, to perish in the scorching heat from that most fearful of all deprivations, water. Hagar, with bitter memories of lost happiness and unjust treatment crowding, cannot bear the sight of her son's woe and sound of his moaning, therefore removes to a slight distance, that she might not see his death nor disturb it as she sought to ease her poor heart with tears. Oh, what moral beauty blossoms in the desert in the maternal love of this outcast bondwoman. No human eye detects it, but God notices and hears her voice, and that of the child. Then comes the direction from heaven, and the promise, "I will make of him a great nation." We are told immediately afterwards in the brief record concerning Ishmael that "God was with the lad," and so the promise was fulfilled. We notice *God's care even for an Ishmael*, for one who would appear to be outside all covenant blessings. He was one whose "hand was to be against every man, and every man's against him" (ch. xvi. 12). God manifested care, however, to this Ishmael—

I. By preserving his life. He heard his cry in distress. He knew his needs. God always knows our needs; whence to supply them, and where to find us even in the wilderness. A well of water is unexpectedly pointed out to the mother. Her eyes were opened to see its whereabouts. So God teaches many a mother, that she may lead her children to the well of living water. Every life preserved is only through the mercy of God. "In his hand our breath is" (Dan. v. 23). There is a well for bondsmen as well as free. God's living well is to be reached in any position of life. It is near to us when we think it far off. "The word is nigh thee, in thine heart," &c. (Rom. x. 8). If we are to see the treasure, our spiritual understanding must be quickened, our "eyes opened" by the Holy Spirit. If we desire to know the way and well of life, we can pray for that opening. Only as we have this spiritual sight and life can we rejoice in the present existence, in our preservation. God preserved Ishmael that he might know him.

II. God advanced him in life. He was with him as he grew up, and gave him favour in the sight of others. God is ever seeking by his Holy Spirit to mould the character of the worst for good. If we have any prosperity and grow up to influence, we should remember that it is from God. The darkest hour for Ishmael had ushered in the dawning of the brightest day. God knew what he would do with Ishmael. Ishmael is to found a nation. It is remarkable that he was the ancestor of the same number of tribes as was Israel (ch. xxv. 16). He found various scattered people in the Arabian desert, but the tribes descended from him seem to have absorbed all others. What an honour to be the founder of a house, a dynasty; how much more of a nation! This God granted to an Ishmael.

III. God gave him skill. "He became an archer." He had to learn to defend himself, and secure for himself, by God's help, a position. The fighting power is not the highest, but man has always had to protect himself before he could make progress in civilisation. Alas, when he supposes himself to be civilised he often clings

to the old habit, and still loves the fighting. The archers, like Ishmael, have their sphere as well as the shepherds, like Isaacs. The fiery defenders of faith and the controversial champions of the truth have their sphere as well as the pious, plodding pastors of Christ's flock. If men have skill for the one thing, let them not despise the powers of others. We have all to learn to appreciate diversity of talents, and to remember that skill in any work is the outcome of independence, resolution, and energy. Ishmael had been endowed with these by God.

IV. God furnished Ishmael with a place of habitation. He gave to him the desert for his domain. Here he might roam and pitch his tent at his own suggestion. God knew that the hot blood of his Egyptian mother, which coursed in his veins, would find its most fitting sphere in the desert. Instead of mingling with gentle herdsmen, he had to dwell among the fierce and untrained spirits of the desert. He became an ancestor of those who despised town life, and who were hardy and frugal enough to exist where others would have perished. Thus to Ishmael, the desert, with its widespread, sun-scorched sands, its scant herbage, its infrequent wells and scattered oases, became a fitting home. God chose for him his dwelling-place, and defined for him the bounds of his habitation. And is it not best for us to leave ourselves in God's hands? He knows best where to place any of us, and what work to give us to do, what sphere to fill. We might prefer the green pasture and hills flowing with milk and honey of the Canaan of prosperity, but the desert of trial and loneliness may be the best for training our spirits. We may have losses to endure outwardly, but if we can acquire a spirit of content and faith, that is great gain. That spirit will lead us to say, "He shall choose our inheritance for us."

V. God also insured Ishmael's honour among his brethren. He was to "dwell in the presence of his brethren" (ch. xvi. 12). Though cast out by Abraham, he was not cast off by God or cut off from all interchange with others. We find (ch. xxv. 6) that Abraham gave portions to the sons of his second wife, Keturah, and sent them away. Doubtless he gave a portion to Ishmael, for we find him uniting with Isaac in the funeral obsequies of his father (ch. xxv. 9). The two sons were not at enmity now. Further, he seems to have kept up his union with his brother, for his daughter Bashemath (ch. xxxvi. 3) married Esau, Isaac's son. Thus two families in the line of promise, but who had cast themselves out—Esau by his indifference, and Ishmael by his mocking—were united. Thus, although of fierce and fiery nature, Ishmael "dwelt in the presence of his brethren." God was with him. He had a shorter life than Isaac. Ishmael died at 130 years old, Isaac at 180. Evidently the active, restless, wandering, hazardous life was more wearing and consuming than the calm and meditative life of the pastoral Isaac. But when he died God cared for him as well as for Isaac, only his purposes with respect to Isaac were different. Isaac was an ancestor after the flesh of the Messiah, but Ishmael had not that honour. Still we must not think that God had cast off Ishmael, and left him utterly and everlastingly to perish. Our God cares for those outside the pale of the Church, even as for those within. The former have not taken up their privileges, nor seen how Christ loves them. They are suffering great loss, and are in danger of further loss, but God cares for and pities them. He wills not the death of a sinner. He pitied the people of Nineveh, sent them a warning, and gave them space for repentance. He healed a Naaman; sent his prophet to dwell with a woman of Sarepta, and so conferred honour upon her; and he brought a Nebuchadnezzar to his right mind by a judicious infliction. All this was mercy shown outside the pale of Israel to those who would be accounted as Ishmaelites. Oh, how much more widely flows the channel of Divine mercy and love than we imagine! How little we conceive the depth of the Father's love to all his creatures! In every heart he is seeking to find a reflection of his image. By the side of every soul, however much of an Ishmaelite, he is seeking by his Holy Spirit to walk, that he may win back to the fold of love and mercy. Oh, ye who think yourselves too sinful to have a share in the Divine compassion, see God's treatment of an Ishmael. Remember that Christ came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." God is merciful even to thoughtless sinners, and gives streams in the desert. If this be the spirit of our God and Saviour, should it not teach us to take an interest in all? As the sun when setting in the west throws his golden and purple rays not only over the broad ocean,

but on the dank ditches of the meadows and the puddles of the street, so should we remember that there is no heart so depraved but the love of God in Christ may light it up. If only we looked at our fellows thus, with deeper sympathy, we should see them won to Christ.—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 22.—**And it came to pass at that time,**—possibly in immediate sequence to the incident of the preceding chapter, but, "according to the common law of Hebrew narrative, probably not long after the birth of Isaac" (Murphy)—**that Abimelech**—the king of Gerar (ch. xx. 2; xxvi. 1, 16)—**and Phichol**—if the name be Shemitic, "mouth of all," *i. e.* spokesman of all (Murphy), ruler of all (Gesenius); or "the distinguished" (Fürst); believed to have been a titular designation of the Philistine monarch's grand vizier or prime minister (Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary'), who was also—**the chief captain of his host** (*i. e.* the commander-in-chief of his forces) **spake unto Abraham** (having come from Gerar for the purpose), **saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest—a** conviction derived from his former acquaintance with the patriarch (ch. xx.), his knowledge of Isaac's birth, and his general observation of the patriarch's prosperity.

Ver. 23.—**Now therefore swear unto me here by God**—the verb to swear is derived from the Hebrew numeral seven, inasmuch as the septennary number was sacred, and oaths were confirmed either by seven sacrifices (ch. xxi. 28) or by seven witnesses and pledges—**that thou wilt not deal falsely with me,**—literally, *if thou shalt lie unto me;* a common form of oath in Hebrew, in which the other member of the sentence is for emphasis left unexpressed (cf. Ruth i. 17, and *vide* ch. xiv. 23). As a prince, Abimelech was afraid of Abraham's growing power; as a good man, he insures the safety of himself and his dominions not by resorting to war, but by forming an amicable treaty with his neighbour—**nor with my son, nor with my son's son**:—σπέρμα καὶ ὄνομα (LXX.); *posteri et stirps* (Vulgate); offspring and progeny (Kalisch); kith and kin (Murphy)—but **according to the kindness that I have done unto thee** (*vide* ch. xx. 15), **thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned**—the land being put for the people (cf. Numb. xiv. 13).

Ver. 24.—**And Abraham said, I will swear.** Only before concluding the agreement there was a matter of a more personal character that required settlement.

Ver. 25.—**And Abraham reproved** (literally, *reasoned with*, and proved to the satisfaction of) **Abimelech** (who was, until informed, entirely unacquainted with the action of his servants) **because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.** The greatest possible injury of a material kind that could be done to a nomade chief was the abstraction of his water supplies. Hence "the ownership of wells in Palestine was as jealously guarded as the possession of a mine in our own" (Inglis). Contests for wells "are now very common all over the country, but more especially in the southern deserts" (Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 559).

Ver. 26.—**And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing.** There is no reason to question the sincerity of the Philistine monarch in disclaiming all knowledge of the act of robbery committed by his servants. **Neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.** The prince rather complains that Abraham had done him an injustice.

Ver. 27.—**And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech.** As the usual covenant presents (cf. 1 Kings xv. 19; Isa. xxx. 6; xxxix. 1). **And both of them made a covenant.** As already Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol had formed a league with the patriarch (*vide* ch. xiv. 13).

Vers. 28—30.—**And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves** (designing by another covenant to secure himself against future invasion of his rights). **And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For** these **seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me,**—that this peculiar kind of oath never occurs again in Old Testament history is no proof of the mythical character of the narrative (Bohlen); on the contrary, "that the custom existed in primitive Hebrew times is shown by the word נִשְׁבַּע, which had early passed into the language, and which would be inexplicable without the existence of such a custom" (Hävernick)—**that I have digged this well.**

Ver. 31.—**Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba.** *I.e.* "the well of the oath," φρέαρ ὁρκισμοῦ (LXX., Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller), or the well of the seven (Keil), rather than the seven wells (Lange); discovered by Robinson in *Bir-es-seba*, in the Wady-es-seba, twelve miles to the south of Hebron, with two deep wells of excellent

water. "The great well has an internal diameter at the mouth of twelve feet six inches, or a circumference of nearly forty feet. The shaft is formed of excellent masonry to a great depth until it reaches the rock, and at this juncture a spring trickles perpetually. Around the mouth of the well is a circular course of masonry, topped by a circular parapet of about a foot high; and at a distance of ten or twelve feet are stone troughs placed in a concentric circle with the well, the sides of which have deep indentions made by the wear of ropes on the upper edges. The second well, about 200 yards farther south, is not more than five feet in diameter, but is formed of equally good masonry, and furnishes equally good water" (*vide* 'Byeways in Palestine,' by James Finn, M.R.A.S., p. 190). **Because there they sware both of them.**

Ver. 33.—**And** Abraham **planted**—as a sign of his peaceful occupation of the soil (Calvin); as a memorial of the transaction about the well ('Speaker's Commentary'); or simply as a shade for his tent (Rosenmüller); scarcely as an oratory (Bush, Kalisch)—**a grove**—the אֵשֶׁל—wood, plantation (Targums, Vulgate, Samaritan, Kimchi); a field, *ἄρουραν* (LXX.)—was probably the *Tamarix Africanæ* (Gesenius, Fürst, Delitzsch, Rosenmüller, Kalisch), which, besides being common in Egypt and Petræa, is said to have been found growing near the ancient Beer-sheba—**in Beer-sheba, and called there** (not beneath the tree or in the grove, but in the place) **on the name of the Lord,**—Jehovah (*vide* ch. xii. 8; xiii. 4)—**the everlasting God**—literally, *the God of eternity* (LXX., Vulgate, Onkelos); not in contrast to heathen deities, who are born and die (Clericus), but "as the everlasting Vindicator of the faith of treaties, and as the infallible Source of the believer's rest and peace" (Murphy).

Ver. 34.—**And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.** The apparent contradiction between the statement of this verse and that of ver. 32 may be removed by supposing either, (1) that as the land of the Philistines had no fixed boundary toward the desert, Beer-sheba may at this time have been claimed for the kingdom of Gerar (Keil); or, (2) that as Beer-sheba was situated on the confines of the Philistines' territory, Abraham must frequently have sojourned in their country while pasturing his flocks (Rosenmüller).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 22—34.—*Abimelech and Abraham, or ancient covenanters.* I. THE POLITICAL ALLIANCE. 1. *The contemplated object.* Peace. What modern monarchs mostly desire at the close of exhausting campaigns is here sought before campaigns begin. 2. *The covenanting parties.* Two powerful princes, in their conduct exemplifying the spirit of unity and peace which should bind together private persons in their daily intercourse, as well as kings and nations in their political alliance. 3. *The impelling motives.* Worldly policy may have urged Abimelech to cement a league with the powerful chieftain in his neighbourhood, but religious affinity would also seem to have exercised an influence in drawing him to seek the friendship of one who appeared to enjoy celestial protection. Good men mostly desire to have the saints as friends, and even the wicked can perceive an advantage in being allied to the righteous. Abraham's acquiescence in the king's proposal was no doubt dictated by a peaceable disposition, a sense of equity, a spirit of contentment, and an unwavering confidence in God. 4. *The public ceremonial.* The alliance was contracted (1) by means of amicable conference, and (2) with the sanctions of religion.

II. THE FRIENDLY REMONSTRANCE. 1. *The palpable injury.* The herdsmen of the king had appropriated Abraham's well. God's people, though expected meekly to suffer wrong, cannot always help seeing that it is wrong they suffer. Nor are they called upon to bear what by lawful means they are able to redress. A good man is entitled to be careful of his property, to preserve it from damage, protect it from theft, and recover it when stolen or lost. 2. *The mistaken charge.* Abraham, thinking the herdsmen had acted on their master's orders, reproved Abimelech. This, however, was an error, which shows (1) that a person cannot always be held responsible for what his servants do, (2) that it is wrong to judge on insufficient evidence with reference to the characters and conduct of others, and (3) that in making charges or preferring complaints it is well to avoid both heat of temper and severity of language. 3. *The satisfactory explanation.* Abimelech declared himself perfectly unacquainted with the wrong which had been done to Abraham, and immediately returned the well, which discovers how easily misunderstandings might be

removed if, instead of harbouring enmity, men would resort to friendly conference. It is as much the duty of him who has a grievance to reveal it, as it is the duty of him who has caused the grievance to remove it. 4. *The prudent measure.* Abraham gave Abimelech seven ewe lambs as a witness that he had digged the well, and consequently had a right to its possession. Seemingly betraying a secret suspicion of the prince's veracity, the act aimed at preventing any recurrence of the grievance, and in this light it appears to have been regarded by Abimelech. Good men should not only rectify the wrongs they do to one another, but adopt all wise precautions against their repetition.

III. THE PLEASING RESULT. 1. *Peace established,* Abimelech and Phichol, having accomplished their mission, returned to Philistia. "Blessed are the peace-makers," and "beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth peace." 2. *Peace commemorated.* Abraham instituted two memorials of the important transactions, naming the well Beersheba, and planting a tamarisk beside his tent. It is good to remember God's mercies, of which national and civil quietude is one of the greatest, and it is becoming to erect memorials of both privileges and obligations. 3. *Peace enjoyed.* Abraham called on the name of the everlasting God. As a planter of tamarisks, the patriarch has been styled the father of civilisation; it is more important to remark that he never neglected to worship God himself and publish his salvation to others. Happy they who can do both in peace!

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 22—34.—*A covenant between the patriarch and the Philistine king.* Abraham a sojourner in that land, afterwards the troubler of Israel; for his sake as discipline, for their sakes as opportunity. 1. God's care for those beyond the covenant. A Beersheba in a heathen land. 2. The things of this world made a channel of higher blessings. The covenant arising out of bodily wants a civil agreement. The oath a testimony to God where reverently made. 3. He is not far from every one of us. The neighbourhood of Beersheba, the revelation of Jehovah, the little company of believers. 4. The blessing made manifest. The days spent in Philistia left behind them some enlightenment. 5. Adaptation of Divine truth to those to whom it is sent. Abraham's name of God, Jehovah El Olam; the two revelations, the God of nature and the God of grace. The name of the Lord itself an invitation to believe and live. Paul at Athens adapted himself in preaching to the people's knowledge while leading them to faith.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass**—the alleged mythical character of the present narrative (De Wette, Bohlen) is discredited not more by express Scripture statement (Heb. xi. 17—19) than by its own inherent difficulties—**after**—how long after may be conjectured from the circumstance that Isaac was now a grown lad, capable of undertaking a three days' journey of upwards of sixty miles—**these things** (literally, *words*, of benediction, promise, trial that had gone before—**that God**—literally, *the Elohim*, i. e. neither Satan, as in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, compared with 2 Sam. xxiv. 1 (Schelling, Stanley), nor Abraham himself, in the sense that a subjective impulse on the part of the patriarch supplied the formal basis of the subsequent transaction (Kurtz, Oehler); but the El-Olam of ch. xxi. 32, the term Elohim being employed by the historian not because vers. 1—13 are Elohistic (Tuch, Bleek, Davidson,)—a hypothesis inconsistent with the internal unity of the chapter, "which is joined together like cast-iron" (Oehler), and in particular with the use of Moriah in ver. 2 (Hengstenberg),—but to indicate the true origin of the after-mentioned trial, which proceeded neither from Satanic instigation nor from subjective impulse, but from God (Keil)—**did tempt**—not solicit to sin (James i. 13), but test or prove (Exod. xvi. 4; Deut. viii. 2; xiii. 3; 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; Ps. xxvi. 2)—**Abraham, and said unto him,**—in a dream-vision of the night (Eich-horn, Lange), but certainly in an audible voice which previous experience enabled him to recognise—**Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.** "These brief introductions of the conversation express the great tension and application of the human mind in those moments

in a striking way, and serve at the same time to prepare us for the importance of the conversation" (Lange).

Ver. 2.—**And he said, Take now**—"the נָא modifies the command, and seems to express that Elohim wished to receive the sacrifice as a free-will offering" (Lange)—**thy son** (not a lamb, but thy child), **thine only** son—not ἀγαπητὸν (LXX.), but *unigenitum* (Vulgate), meaning the only son of Sarah, the only legitimate offspring he possessed, the only heir of the promise, the only child that remained to him after Ishmael's departure (cf. ὁ μονογενής, John i. 18)—**Isaac, whom thou lovest,**—or, *whom thou lovest, Isaac;* the order and accumulation of the terms being calculated to excite the parental affection of the patriarch to the highest pitch, and to render compliance with the Divine demand a trial of the utmost severity—**and get thee**—literally, *go for thyself* (cf. ch. xii. 1; xxi. 16)—**into the land of Moriah.** Moriah = vision (Vulgate, Symmachus, Samaritan), worship (Onkelos, Jonathan), high (LXX.), rebellious (Murphy); but rather a compound of יה and מֹרי, meaning God is my instructor, alluding to the temple from which the law should afterwards proceed (Kalisch), or, better, of יה and ראה, and signifying "the shown of Jehovah," *i. e.* the revelation or manifestation of Jehovah (Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Keil, &c.); or "the chosen," *i. e.* "pointed out of God," with reference to its selection as the site of the Divine sanctuary (Gesenius), or rather because there God provided and pointed out the sacrifice which he elected to accept (Lange). **And offer him there for a burnt offering**—not make a spiritual surrender of him in and through a burnt-offering (Hengstenberg, Lange), but actually present him as a holocaust. That Abraham did not stagger on receiving this astounding injunction may be accounted for by remembering that the practice of offering human sacrifices prevailed among the early Chaldæans and Canaanites, and that as yet no formal prohibition, like that of the Mosaic code, had been issued against them—**upon one of the mountains**—not Moreh in Sichem (Tuch, Michaelis, Stanley, Grove, *et alii*), which was too distant, but Moriah at Jerusalem (Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Keil, Kalisch), where subsequently God appeared to David (2 Sam. xxiv. 16), and the temple of Solomon was built (2 Chron. iii. 1)—**which I will tell thee of**—*i. e.* point out (probably by secret inspiration) as thou proceedest.

Ver. 3.—**And Abraham rose up early in the morning,**—a habit of the patriarch's after receiving a Divine communication (cf. ch. xix. 27; xx. 8; xxi. 14)—**and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him** (the ass for the wood, and the young men for the ass), **and Isaac his son** (explaining to him as yet only his intention to offer sacrifice upon a distant mountain), **and clave the wood for the burnt offering** (obviously with his own hands), **and rose up** (expressive of resolute determination), **and went unto** (or towards) **the place of which God had told him**—literally, *the Elohim had spoken to him.* The accumulation of brief, sententious clauses in this verse admirably represents the calm deliberation and unflinching heroism with which the patriarch proceeded to execute the Divine command.

Ver. 4.—**Then on the third day**—Jerusalem, being distant from Beersheba about twenty and a half hours' journey according to Robinson, could easily be within sight on the third day—**Abraham lifted up his eyes,**—not implying that the object of vision was above him (cf. ch. xiii. 10)—**and saw the place** (which Calvin conjectures he had previously beheld in vision) **afar off.** Though Mount Moriah cannot be seen by the traveller from Beersheba till within a distance of three miles (Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 251), the place or region where it is can be detected (Kalisch).

Ver. 5.—**And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye** (for similar forms of expression cf. ch. xii. 1; xxi. 6; xxii. 2) **here with the ass;**—partly because the beast required watching, though chiefly because the contemplated sacrifice was too solemn for any eyes but God's to witness—**and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.** An act of dissimulation on the part of Abraham (Knobel, Kalisch, Murphy); an unconscious prophecy (Lyra, Junius, Rashi); the expression of a hopeful wish (Lange); a somewhat confused utterance (Calvin, Keil); the voice of his all-conquering faith (Augustine, Calvin, Wordsworth, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis), which last seems the teaching of Heb. xi. 19.

Ver. 6.—**And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son;**—instinctively the mind reverts to the cross-bearing of Abraham's greater Son (John xix. 17)—**and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife** (to him terribly suggestive weapons); **and they went both of them together.** Doubtless in silence on Abraham's part and wonder on Isaac's, since as yet no declaration had been made of the true purpose of their journey.

Ver. 7.—**And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father,**—during the progress of the journey, after leaving the young men, solitude inviting him to give expression to thoughts which had been rising in his bosom, but which the presence of companions had constrained him to suppress—**and said, My father:**—a term

of filial reverence and endearment that must have lacerated Abraham's heart. As used by Isaac it signified a desire to interrogate his parent—**and he said, Here am I, my son** (literally, *Behold me, my son* = Well, my son, what is it? in colloquial English). **And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering.** Another hint that the sacrificial system did not originate with Moses.

Ver. 8.—**And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering**:—the utterance of heroic faith rather than the language of pious dissimulation (*vide* on ver. 5)—**so they went both of them together.** To see in this twice-repeated expression a type of the concurrence of the Father and the Son in the work of redemption (Wordsworth) is not exegesis.

Ver. 9.—**And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there,**—*i. e.* upon the mountain summit or slope (ver. 2)—**and laid the wood in order** (it is scarcely likely that Isaac was permitted to assist in these affecting preparations), **and bound Isaac his son,**—who must have acquiesced in his father's purpose, and thereby evinced his faith in the Divine commandment. The term "bound," though seeming to convey the idea of violence, derives its significance from the binding of the sacrificial victim—**and laid him on the altar on the wood.** The feelings of the patriarch throughout this transaction are simply inconceivable.

Ver. 10.—**And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son**—who even in the last moment offers no resistance, but behaves like a type of him who was led like a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. liii. 7).

Ver. 11.—**And the angel of the Lord**—Maleach Jehovah (*vide* ch. xvi. 7); introduced into the narrative at this point not as a Jehovistic alteration (Bleek, Kalisch, *et alii*), but because the God of redemption now interposes for the deliverance of both Isaac and Abraham (Hengstenberg)—**called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham** (the repetition denotes urgency, as contrasted with ver. 1): **and he said, Here am I.**

Ver. 12.—**And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him.** Abraham's surrender of the son of his affections having been complete, there was no need to push the trial further. The voice from heaven has been accepted as evidence of God's rejection of human sacrifices (Lange, Murphy), only that is not assigned as the reason for Isaac's deliverance. **For now I know**—literally, *have known;* not caused thee to know (Augustine), but caused others to know (Lange); or the words are used anthropomorphically (Calvin)—**that thou fearest God,**—*Elohim;* the Divine intention being to characterise the patriarch as a God-fearing man, and not simply as a worshipper of Jehovah (cf. Quarry 'on Genesis,' p. 460)—**seeing**—literally, *and* (sc. in proof thereof)—**thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.** Καὶ οὐκ ἐφείσω τοῦ υἱοῦ σοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ δι' ἐμέ (LXX.). Cf. ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο (Rom. viii. 32), as applied to the sacrifice of Christ. In this verse the angel of Jehovah identifies himself with Elohim.

Ver. 13.—**And Abraham lifted up his eyes** (in the direction of the voice), **and looked, and behold behind** him—either at his back (Fürst, Keil, Lange, Murphy), or in the background of the altar, *i. e.* in front of him (Gesenius, Kalisch). The LXX., Samaritan, Syriac, mistaking אַחַר for אֶחָד, read "one," which adds nothing to the sense or picturesqueness of the composition—**a ram**—אַיִל; in the component letters of which cabalistic writers find the initial letters of יִרְאֶה־לּוֹ אֱלֹהִים, God will provide for himself (ver. 8; *vide* Glass, 'Phil. Tract.,' p. 196). In the animal itself the Fathers (Augustine, Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Ambrose) rightly discerned a type of Christ, though it is fanciful to detect a shadow of the crown of thorns in the words that follow—**caught in a thicket by his horns** (the *sebach* being the intertwined branches of trees or brushwood): **and Abraham went and took the ram, and** (though not directed what to do, yet with a fine spiritual instinct discerning the Divine purpose) **offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son**—whom he thus received from the dead as in a figure (Heb. xi. 19).

Ver. 14.—**And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh**:—*i. e.* the Lord will provide (Jonathan, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, &c.), rather than the Lord selects, or looks out, *i. e.* the sacrifices to be afterwards offered in the temple worship on Moriah (Kalisch); or, the Lord shall appear (Oort, Kuenen), which overlooks the manifest allusion to ver. 8—**as it is said** to **this day,**—or, so that it is said; cf. ch. xiii. 16 (Keil)—**In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen**—or "it shall be provided" (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Dathe, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though by competent authorities it has been otherwise rendered. "In the mount the Lord shall appear, or be seen" (LXX.); "in the mount the Lord will see, or provide" (Vulgate, Syriac, Samaritan); "in the mount of the Lord he will be seen" (Murphy); "in the mount of the Lord one shall be seen," or "people appear," *i. e.* the people of God shall gather on this mountain for worship

(Kalisch); "on the mountain where Jehovah appears" (Keil). Amidst such a conflict of interpretations absolute certainty is perhaps unattainable; but the sense of the proverb will probably be expressed by understanding it to mean that on the mount of Abraham's sacrifice Jehovah would afterwards reveal himself for the salvation of his people, as he then interposed for the help of Abraham—a prophecy which was afterwards fulfilled in the manifestations of the Divine glory given in the Solomonic temple and in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Vers. 15—18.—**And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,**—the object of the first call having been to arrest the consummation of the fatal deed which threatened Isaac's life, and to declare the Divine satisfaction with the patriarch's complete spiritual surrender of his son, the purpose of the second was to renew the promise in reward for his fidelity and obedience—**and said, By myself have I sworn,**—by my word (Onkelos); by my name (Arabic); equivalent to by himself, by his soul (Jer. li. 14), or by his holiness (Amos iv. 2)—an anthropomorphism by which God in the most solemn manner pledges the perfection of his Divine personality for the fulfilment of his promise; an act which he never again repeats in his intercourse with the patriarchs. The oath here given to Abraham (frequently referred to in later Scripture: ch. xxiv. 7; xxvi. 3; l. 24; Exod. xiii. 5, 11; xxxii. 13; xxxiii. 1; Isa. xlv. 23; Heb. vi. 13) is confirmed by the addition of—**saith the Lord,**—literally, *the utterance of Jehovah;* like the Latin *ait, inquit Dominus,* the usual prophetic phrase accompanying Divine oracles (cf. Isa. iii. 15; Ezek. v. 11; Amos vi. 8), though occurring in the Pentateuch only here and in Num. xiv. 28—**for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only** son (*vide supra,* ver. 12; from which the LXX., Syriac, and Samaritan insert here the words "from me"): **that in blessing I will bless thee, and, multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore;** —literally, *upon the lip of the sea;* a repetition and accumulation of the promises previously made to the patriarch concerning his seed (cf. ch. xii. 2, 3; xiii. 14—16; xv. 5; xvii. 1—8), with the special amplification following—**and thy seed shall possess** (*i. e.* occupy by force) **the gate of his enemies;**—shall conquer their armies and capture their cities (Keil, Murphy); though that the spiritual sense of entering in through the doorway of their susceptibilities in conversion (Lange) is not to be overlooked may be inferred from the appended prediction—**and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed** (*vide* ch. xii. 3, where "families of the ground" occur as the equivalent of "nations of the earth"); **because thou hast obeyed my voice.** Originally unconditional in its grant, the promise is here distinctly declared to be renewed to him as one who, besides being justified and taken into covenant with Jehovah, had through trial and obedience attained to the spiritual patriarchate of a numerous posterity.

Ver. 19.—**So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—19.—*Mount Moriah, or the mount of sacrifice.* I. ABRAHAM'S TRIAL. 1. *Divine in its origin.* However explained, the appalling ordeal through which the patriarch at this time passed was expressly created for him by Elohim. Only he who made the human heart can adequately search it; and he alone who has a perfect understanding of the standard of moral excellence can pronounce upon the intrinsic worth of his creatures. 2. *Unexpected in its coming.* After all that had preceded, it might have been anticipated that not only were the patriarch's trials over, but that the need for such discipline in his case no longer existed. It shows that neither length of years nor ripeness of grace, neither conscious enjoyment of Divine favour nor previous experience of suffering, can exempt from trial or place beyond the need of testing; and that mostly "temptations" come at unexpected times, and in unlooked-for ways. 3. *Severe in its form.* Trials to be efficient must be graduated to the strength of those they design to test. Only a temptation of great force could be of service in the case of moral heroism like Abraham's. The intensity of the strain put upon his soul by the astounding order to make a holocaust of Isaac simply baffles description. Even on the supposition that Abraham was not unfamiliar with the practice of offering human victims, as it prevailed among the Canaanites and early Chaldæans, painful doubt must have insinuated itself into his mind (1) as to the character of Jehovah, who in making such a barbarous and inhuman demand might seem little superior to the heathen deities around; (2) as to

his own enjoyment of the Divine favour, which could scarcely fail to be staggered by such an excruciating stab to his natural affection; but, (3) and chiefly, as to the stability of the promise, which reason could not but pronounce impossible of fulfilment if Isaac must be put to death. Yet, overwhelming as the trial was, it was—4. *Needful in its design.* The great covenant blessing was still conditioned on the exercise by the patriarch of full-hearted trust in the naked word of God. Not until that standpoint had been reached by Abraham in his spiritual development was he able to become the parent of Isaac; and now that Isaac was born there was still the danger lest Isaac, and not the naked word of God, should be the ground of the patriarch's confidence. Hence the necessity arose for testing whether Abraham could resign Isaac and yet cling to the promise.

II. ABRAHAM'S VICTORY. 1. The *splendour* of it. The tremendous act of self-immolation was performed not without pain, else Abraham must have been either more or less than human, but (1) with unhesitating promptitude—"Abraham rose up early in the morning," and "went unto the place of which God had told him;" (2) with literal exactness—"Abraham laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar on the wood;" (3) in perfect sincerity—"Abraham stretched forth his hand to slay his son;" yet (4) without ostentation—Abraham went alone with his son to the mount of sacrifice. 2. The *secret* of it. This was faith. He accounted that, though Isaac should be slain, God was able to raise him up again from the dead. Hence, though prepared to plunge the knife into his son's breast, and to reduce his beloved form to ashes, he "staggered not at the promise."

III. ABRAHAM'S REWARD. 1. *The deliverance of Isaac.* (1) The time of it. At the moment when the sacrifice was about to be consummated, neither too soon for evincing the completeness of Abraham's obedience, nor too late for effecting Isaac's preservation. (2) The reason of it. Because the piety and faith of the patriarch were sufficiently demonstrated. God often accepts the will for the deed. (3) The manner of it. By the substitution of a ram, a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whose atoning death the Isaac of the Church is delivered from condemnation. (4) The teaching of it. If Abraham's surrender of Isaac was a shadow of the sacrificing love of the eternal Father in sparing not his only Son, and the bound Isaac typical of the Church's condemned condition before the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, and the substituted ram was emblematic of him who, though he knew no sin, was made a sin offering for us, the deliverance of Isaac was symbolic both of the resurrection life of Christ and of the new life of his redeemed people. 2. *The confirmation of the blessing.* (1) A renewal of the promises—of a numerically great, territorially prosperous, and spiritually influential posterity, and more particularly of that distinguished seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed; (2) a specification of the ground on which they were held, viz., the patriarch's believing obedience to the Divine commandment; and (3) a solemn oath in guarantee of their fulfilment.

Lessons:—1. The certainty of trial. 2. The omnipotence of faith. 3. The blessedness of obedience.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 12.—*Abraham's perfect faith.* "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." "The word of God," says Coleridge, "speaks to man, and therefore it speaks the language of the children of men. This has to be kept in mind in studying the remarkable incident recorded in this chapter. When God is represented as "tempting" Abraham, it only means that he tried or tested him.

I. THE TESTING OF FAITH. Abraham was to be the head of the faithful and type of the justified, therefore it was essential he should be tested. Entire obedience is the test of perfect faith. Abraham had shown his faith when he left his own land, and when he waited patiently for a son; now he has to show it in a different way. In the two former testings he had a promise to rest on; now he must go far without any promise to buoy him up in the perplexing sea of trial. "Take now thy son," &c. Surely there is some mistake! Must Abraham offer a human sacrifice? This event

has perplexed many, and they have only escaped from the difficulties presented by regarding the event—(1) As exceptional for the purpose of securing a unique type of the future sacrifice of Christ. (2) As never intended to be actually carried out, God having foreseen the faith of his servant, and having determined at the right moment to interfere and prevent any disaster. There is also a miraculous element in the narrative, both in the special voice and the ram caught in the thicket. Some have thought that the impulse was from Abraham's own mind—that, seeing human sacrifices around, he wished to rise above all others in devotion to the one God. Had this been the case, the Scriptures would not have represented the testing as from God. In that age a father's right to do as he would with his son was as unquestioned as his right to do what he would with his slave. The command of God was not out of harmony with this idea, but it helped to correct the mistake. A single act of such self-sacrifice becomes of the highest value; it is even a means of education to the world. God elicited the highest exercise of faith, but not the blood of Isaac. What it must have cost the patriarch to submit to the Divine command! With one blow he must slay his boy and his own ardent hopes. The only gleam of light was in the thought that God who first gave Isaac could also restore him from death. This is indicated in the words he uttered to the young man, "*We* will come again to you." Tradition says that the mount was the same on which Adam, Abel, and Noah had offered sacrifice. Here possibly Abraham found an altar to repair or rebuild. Isaac helps in rebuilding the altar and in arranging the wood. Silent prayers ascend from father and son. Isaac wonders where the lamb is to come from. He finds out when his father has bound him and laid him on the altar. The knife gleams aloft, and, but for the arresting voice, would have been plunged in Isaac. The test was satisfactory.

II. God's MANIFEST APPROVAL OF THE PATRIARCH'S FAITH AND PERFECT OBEDIENCE. 1. It was by a voice from heaven. 2. It was manifested also by the way in which God took away any pain consequent on obedience to his command. It is remarkable how those who appear to have little faith can become, when trial falls, perfectly submissive to the Divine will. 3. The approval was seen also in the way in which God provided a sacrifice. 4. And God repeated his promise of blessing, confirming it by a solemn covenant. "By myself have I sworn," &c. No such voice comes to us, and no such promise is audibly given; still we can have, in the inner calm of the soul, an evidence of the Divine approval. When our faith is strongest, after passing through some trial, we get a clearer view of the glory of God's working, both in our lives and in the world. What approval have we won? Does not Abraham put us to shame? Too many will laud the obedience of Abraham who will never try to emulate it. Abraham was glad to have his Isaac spared; so would the Father have been, but he gave up his "only-begotten, well-beloved Son" for us. Our readiness to accept and follow the Saviour given is only another way of showing how we bear the testing of faith. "Thy will be done" should be the utterance of each believer. Perfect faith in the heart should be exhibited by perfect obedience in life.—H.

Ver. 14.—*The Lamb of God.* "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh." The key to this narrative is John i. 29. It sets forth in type the way of salvation. Whether Abraham understood this we need not inquire. The lesson is for us. Isaac, *i. e.* laughter (cf. Luke ii. 10), the child of promise (Rom. ix. 7), type of "the children of the kingdom," is yet condemned to die (cf. Rom. v. 12). So in Egypt the Israelites were not exempted; God's gift to them was a way of escape. What is that way? (cf. Micah vi. 6). Every age of the world has asked this question. A sense of separation from God has led to many efforts for its removal. Hence sacrifices, offerings, austerities, &c., but all in vain (Heb. x. 4). Still the soul asked, "Where is the Lamb?" the effectual sacrifice for sin. The answer of prophecy, *i. e.* God's answer, "God will provide himself a lamb" (cf. John i. 29; viii. 56). Man has no claim upon God, yet his need is a plea (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7). We know not what was in Abraham's mind; perhaps he was escaping from the direct answer, unable to utter it; perhaps there was a hope that God would in some way preserve or restore his son (cf. Heb. xi. 19). There are many instances of prophecy unconsciously uttered (cf. John xi. 50). Isaac was bound—

type of man's helplessness to escape from the curse (cf. Luke iv. 18), or from the law of sin in the members. The law of God of itself can only condemn. It can only be fulfilled by one who loves God; but he who is not at peace with God cannot love him. The sacrifice was now complete as far as Abraham could offer it. He had cast down self-will (cf. Matt. xxvi. 39); he had sacrificed himself (Rom. xii. 1). This is the state of mind of all others most prepared to receive blessings (cf. 2 Kings iv. 3—6). "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." God's purpose our deliverance (Rom. viii. 1). The work of the law, bringing home the conviction of sin, is the prelude to the knowledge of life (cf. Rom. vii. 10—13)—life through death. God's way of deliverance (Isa. liii. 6). The type, the ram caught in the thicket; the antitype, Christ fulfilling the Father's will (Matt. xxvi. 54; Mark xv. 31). The practical application of this shown in brazen serpent (John iii. 14). Marvellous love of God (Rom. v. 8). We had no claim on him, yet he would not that we should perish (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). He wanted, for the fulness of his blessedness, that we should partake of it, and therefore Christ came that he might die in our stead; and now in him we are dead (2 Cor. v. 4). Do not dilute the truth by saying he died for believers only. This is to miss the constraining power of his love. If there is any doubt of his death being for each and all, the gospel is no longer felt to be "whosoever will" (Rev. xxii. 17). Behold the Lamb. We need not now to say, "God will provide;" he has provided (1 John ii. 2). The universe could not purchase that propitiation. No efforts could make thee worthy of it, yet it is freely offered to thee today. And mark what that gift includes (Rom. viii. 32)—the help of the Holy Spirit (Luke xi. 13), wisdom (James i. 5), help in trials (1 Cor. x. 13), peace (Rom. viii. 33), needs of this life (Luke xii. 30). Bring all thy sins, thy wants, thy hindrances to the mercy-seat (Heb. iv. 16). The Lord will see, will look upon thy need; and ere thy prayer is offered he has provided what that need requires.—M.

Vers. 15—19.—*The great trial and the great revelation.* In such a history the representative character of Abraham must be remembered. He was tried not only for his own sake, but that in him all the families of the earth might be blessed.

I. The PREPARATION for this great grace God and Abraham recognising each other; the servant called by name, responding with the profession of readiness for obedience.

II. The COMMANDMENT is itself a secret communication, a covenant. Do this, and I will bless thee; follow me in this journey "as I tell thee," and thou shalt see my salvation.

III. The simple, childlike OBEDIENCE of the patriarch is reflected in the quiet demeanour of Isaac bearing the wood of the burnt offering, type of Jesus bearing his cross, inquiring for the lamb with lamb-like innocence and patience. "They went both of them together" (vers. 6 and 8)—"together" in the beginning of the journey, "together" in the end, in the trial and in the blessing.

IV. FAITH which accepts the will of God and takes up the Divine mission WILL COMMIT THE FUTURE TO THE GRACIOUS PROVISION ON WHICH IT DEPENDS. "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (ver. 8). Already Abraham was saying, "The Lord will provide." We say it sometimes with a fearful burden upon our heart; but when we go steadfastly and hopefully forward we say it at last with the remembrance of a great deliverance sending its glory along the way of our future.

V. THE TRIAL OF THE TRUE HEART IS OFTEN STRETCHED OUT TO ITS LAST EXTREMITY, that the revelation which rewards faithfulness may be the more abundant and wonderful (vers. 9, 10). We must take God at his word, otherwise we shall not experience the promised deliverance. "Take thy son, and offer him there" (ver. 2). "And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." What else could he do? The commandment must be obeyed. The obedience must be "good and perfect and acceptable" as the will of God.

VI. AT THE POINT OF ENTIRE SURRENDER APPEARS THE ANGEL, is heard the voice of relief, the assurance of acceptance, the change in the method of obedience, the opened eyes, the provided sacrifice, THE RETURNING JOY OF SALVATION (vers. 11—13). There is a blindness of self-sacrifice which leads to a sight of immeasurable joy.

Abraham saw nothing before him but the plain path of obedience; he went on, and at last "lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold" the self-sacrifice changed into peaceful offering of an appointed substitute (ver. 13) "*in the stead of his son.*"

VII. THE CLIMAX OF OUR EXPERIENCE AND OF DIVINE MERCY BECOMES TO US A NEW NAME OF JEHOVAH. We know him henceforth by that knowledge of fact. "Jehovah-jireh (the Lord will provide): as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided" (or seen) (ver. 14). 1. *Not before the mount*, but *in the mount;* therefore go to the summit and wait. 2. What the Lord will provide will be *better every way than what we could provide.* 3. The offering on the mount is *the great provision*, the whole burnt offering for the sins of the world, by which the true humanity is redeemed and the true "joy" ("Isaac," laughter) is retained. 4. The last name of Jehovah which Abraham gave him was *Jehovah the Everlasting;* now he adds to that name that which brings the Everlasting into the sphere of daily life—"*Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.*" We name that name when we *reach the mount* where the great sacrifice was provided—*Mount Moriah, Mount Calvary.* 5. *The end* of the great trial and obedience was a renewal, a *solemn republication, of the covenant.* "God could swear by no greater; he sware by himself" (Heb. vi. 13). On the foundation of *practical faith* is built up *the kingdom of heaven*, which the Lord swears shall include all nations, and be supreme in all the earth. The *notes of that kingdom* are here in the history of the patriarch—(1) *acceptance of the word of God*, (2) *self-sacrifice*, (3) *faith instead of sight*, (4) *withholding nothing*, (5) *perseverance to the end.* Beersheba became now a new place to Abraham, for he carried to the well and grove which he had named after the oaths of himself and Abimelech the remembrance of the Divine oath, on which henceforth he rested all his expectations. After this the man in whom all nations shall be blessed looks round and finds the promise being already fulfilled, and his kindred spreading widely in the earth.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 20.—**And it came to pass after these things** (probably not long after his return to Beersheba), **that it was told** (by some unknown messenger or accidental traveller from Mesopotamia) **Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah** (*vide* ch. xi. 29), **she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor**—as Sarah has born a son to thee. From this it would almost seem as if Milcah had not begun to have her family at the time Abram left Ur of the Chaldees; but *vide* ch. xi. 30. The present brief table of Nahor's descendants is introduced for the sake of showing the descent of Rebekah, who is soon to become Isaac's wife.

Ver. 21.—**Huz his firstborn,**—(*vide* ch. x. 23, where Uz appears as a son of Aram; and ch. xxxvi. 28, where he recurs as a descendant of Esau. That he was a progenitor of Job (Jerome) has no better foundation than Job i. 1—**and Buz his brother,**—mentioned along with Dedan and Tema as an Arabian tribe (Jer. xxv. 23), and may have been an ancestor of Elihu (Job xxxii. 2)—**and Kemuel the father of Aram.** "Not the founder of the Arameans, but the forefather of the family of Ram, to which the Buzite Elihu belonged; Aram being written for Ram, like Arammim, in 2 Kings viii. 29, for Rammim, in 2 Chron. xxii. 5" (Keil).

Ver. 22.—**And Chesed,**—according to Jerome the father of the Chasdim or Chaldees (ch. xi. 28); but more generally regarded as the head of a younger branch or offshoot of that race (Keil, Murphy, Lange; cf. Job i. 17)—**and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph** (concerning whom nothing is known), **and Bethuel**—"man of God" (Gesenius); dwelling of God (Fürst); an indication probably of his piety.

Ver. 23.—**And Bethuel begat Rebekah**—*Ribkah;* captivating, ensnaring (Fürst); "a rope with a noose," not unfit as the name of a girl who ensnares men by her beauty (Gesenius). Rebekah was the child of Isaac's cousin, and being the daughter of Nahor's youngest son, was probably about the same age as her future husband. **These eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.**

Ver. 24.—**And his concubine** (*vide* on ch. xvi. 3), **whose name was Reumah,**—raised, elevated (Gesenius); pearl or coral (Fürst)—**she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah**—whence probably the Maachathites (Deut. iii. 14; Josh. xlii. 5). That three of Terah's descendants (Nahor, Ishmael, and Jacob) should each have twelve sons has been pronounced "a contrived symmetry, the intentional character of which

cannot be mistaken" (Bohlen); but "*what* intention the narrator should have connected with it remains inconceivable, unless it was to state the fact as it was, or (on the supposition that some of them had more than twelve sons) to supply a round number easily retainable by the memory" (Hävernick).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 20—24.—*Good news from a far country.* I. THE JOYFUL BUDGET. 1. *Tidings from home.* For nearly half a century Abraham had been a wanderer in Palestine, and with something like an emigrant's emotion on receiving letters from the old country would the patriarch listen to the message come from Haran beyond the river. 2. *News concerning Nahor.* It demands no violent exercise of fancy to believe that Abraham regarded his distant brother with intense fraternal affection, and that the unexpected report of that distant brother's prosperity struck a chord of joy within his aged bosom. 3. *A message about Milcah.* When the two brothers parted it would seem that neither of their spouses had begun to have a family. Now information reaches the patriarchal tent that the union of Nahor and Milcah, like that of himself and Sarai, has been blessed with offspring; and, in particular, that the second generation had begun to appear in Nahor's house, the queenly grace of Milcah being reproduced in her captivating grandchild Rebekah.

II. THE WELCOME MESSENGER. 1. *His unknown name.* One is curious to know who it was that brought the tidings from the old home. Some spirited adventurer who at the distance of half a century sought to emulate the Chaldæan chieftain who left the valley of the Euphrates for the bleak hills of Palestine; some Mesopotamian Stanley whom Nahor, now a wealthy Emir, had despatched upon a mission of inquiry after his long-lost brother; or some chance traveller who had come across the patriarch's tent. 2. *His timely arrival.* Whoever he was, his appearance at this particular juncture was exceedingly opportune, when, the great trial having passed, Isaac's marriage must have loomed in the prospect as a near possibility. To Abraham it must have seemed not a fortuitous occurrence, but a providential arrangement.

Learn—1. That no passage of Scripture can be said to be entirely useless. 2. That joy and sorrow mostly lie in close contiguity in human life. 3. That it becomes good men and women to be interested in each other's welfare. 4. That in God's government of the world there are no such things as accidents. 5. That it becomes good men to keep an outlook upon the leadings of Divine providence.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1.—**And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old** (literally, *and the lives of Sarah were an hundred and twenty and seven years*); so that Isaac must have been thirty-seven, having been born in his mother's ninetieth year. Sarah, as the wife of Abraham and the mother of believers (Isa. li. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 6), is the only woman whose age is mentioned in Scripture. These were **the years of the life of Sarah**—an emphatic repetition designed to impress the Israelitish mind with the importance of remembering the age of their ancestress.

Ver. 2.—**And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba**—or city of Arba, Abraham having again removed thither after an absence of nearly forty years, during which interval Murphy thinks the reign of Arba the Anakite may have commenced, though Keil postpones it to a later period (cf. Josh. xiv. 15). **The same is Hebron**—the original name of the city, which was supplanted by that of Kirjath-arba, but restored at the conquest (Keil, Hengstenberg, Murphy; *vide* ch. xiii. 18)—**in the land of Canaan**—indicating that the writer was not then in Palestine ('Speaker's Commentary'); perhaps rather designed to emphasise the circumstance that Sarah's death occurred not in the Philistines' country, but in the promised land (Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy). **And Abraham came**—or went; ἦλθε (LXX.), *venit* (Vulgate); not as if he had been absent at her death (Calvin), either in Beersheba, where he retained a location (Clarke), or in Gerar, whither he had gone to sell the lands and other properties he held there (Luther), or in the pasture grounds adjoining Hebron (Keil, Murphy); but as addressing himself to the work of mourning for his deceased wife (Vatablus, Rosen-

müller), or perhaps as going into Sarah's tent (Maimonides, Ainsworth, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary')—**to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.** "To arrange for the customary mourning ceremony" (Keil); the first verb, סָפַד (cf. σφαδάζω), referring to the beating of the breast as a sign of grief (cf. 1 Kings xiv. 13); and the second, בָּכָה, to flow by drops, intimating a quieter and more moderate sorrow. Beyond sitting on the ground and weeping in presence of (or upon the face of) the dead, no other rites are mentioned as having been observed by Abraham; though afterwards, as practised among the Hebrews, Egyptians, and other nations of antiquity, mourning for the dead developed into an elaborate ritual, including such ceremonies as rending the garments, shaving the head, wearing sackcloth, covering the head with dust and ashes (*vide* 2 Sam. iii. 31, 35; xxi. 10; Job i. 20; ii. 12; xvi. 15, 16). Cf. the mourning for Patroclus ('Il.,' xix. 211—213).

Ver. 3.—**And Abraham stood up**—during the days of mourning he had been sitting on the ground; and now, his grief having moderated (Calvin), he goes out to the city gate—**from before** (literally, *from over the face of*) **his dead,**—"Sarah, though dead, was still his" (Wordsworth)—**and spake unto the sons of Heth,**—the Hittites were descendants of Heth, the son of Canaan (*vide* ch. x. 15). Cf. "daughters of Heth" (ch. xxvii. 46) and "daughters of Canaan" (ch. xxviii. 1)—**saying.**

Ver. 4.—**I am a stranger and a sojourner with you.** *Gêr*, one living out of his own country, and *Thoshabh*, one dwelling in a land in which he is not naturalised; *advena et peregrinus* (Vulgate); πάροικος καὶ παρ' ἐπίδημος (LXX.). This confession of the heir of Canaan was a proof that he sought, as his real inheritance, a better country, even an heavenly (Heb. xi. 13). **Give me a possession of a burying-place with you.** The first mention of a grave in Scripture, the word in Hebrew signifying a hole in the earth, or a mound, according as the root is taken to mean to dig (Fürst) or to heap up (Gesenius). Abraham's desire for a grave in which to deposit Sarah's lifeless remains was dictated by that Divinely planted and, among civilised nations, universally prevailing reverence for the body which prompts men to decently dispose of their dead by rites of honourable sepulture. The burning of corpses was a practice common to the nations of antiquity; but Tacitus notes it as characteristic of the Jews that they preferred interment to cremation ('Hist.,' v. 5). The wish to make Sarah's burying-place his own possession has been traced to the instinctive desire that most nations have evinced to lie in ground belonging to themselves (Rosenmüller), to an intention on the part of the patriarch to give a sign of his right and title to the land of Canaan by purchasing a grave in its soil—cf. Isa. xxii. 16 (Bush), or simply to anxiety that his dead might not lie unburied (Calvin); but it was more probably due to his strong faith that the land would yet belong to his descendants, which naturally led him to crave a resting-place in the soil with which the hopes of both himself and people were identified (Ainsworth, Bush, Kalisch). **That I may bury my dead out of my sight**—decay not suffering the lifeless corpse to remain a fit spectacle for grief or love to gaze on.

Vers. 5, 6.—**And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord.** My lord (Adoni) = sir, *monsieur*, or *mein herr*. One acts as the spokesman of all; the number changing from plural to singular. The LXX., reading לֹא instead of לוֹ, after the Samaritan Codex, render μὴ κύριε, Not so, my lord; but hear us. **Thou art a mighty prince among us.** Literally, *a prince of Elohim;* not of Jehovah, since the speakers were heathen whose ideas of Deity did not transcend those expressed in the term Elohim. According to a familiar Hebrew idiom, the phrase might be legitimately translated as in the A. V.—cf. "mountains of God," *i. e.* great mountains, Ps. xxxvi. 6; "cedars of God," *i. e.* goodly cedars, Ps. lxxx. 10 (Calvin, Kimchi, Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary'); but, as employed by the Hittite chieftains, it probably expressed that they regarded him as a prince or phylarch, not to whom God had given an elevated aspect (Lange), but either whom God had appointed (Gesenius), or whom God manifestly favoured (Kalisch, Murphy). This estimate of Abraham strikingly contrasts with that which the patriarch had formed (ver. 4) of himself. **In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us will withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.** This remarkable offer on the part of the Hittites Thomson ('Land and Book,' p. 578) regards as having been merely compliment, which Abraham was too experienced an Oriental not to understand. But, even if dictated by true kindness and generosity, the proposal was one to which for many reasons—faith in God, love for the dead, and respect for himself being among the strongest—the patriarch could not accede. With perfect courtesy, therefore, though likewise with respectful firmness, he declines their offer.

Ver. 7.—**And Abraham stood up** (the customary posture among Orientals in buying and selling being that of sitting), **and bowed himself to the people of the land,**

even **to the children of Heth**—an act of respect quite accordant with modern Oriental manners (*vide* Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 579).

Vers. 8, 9.—**And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind**—literally, *if it be with your souls*, the word *nephesh* being used in this sense in Ps. xxvii. 12; xli. 3; cv. 22—**that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar.** The ruler of the city (Keil); but this is doubtful (Lange). "There is scarcely anything in the habits of Orientals more annoying to us Occidentals than this universal custom of employing mediators to pass between you and those with whom you wish to do business. Nothing can be done without them. A merchant cannot sell a piece of print, nor a farmer a yoke of oxen, nor any one rent a house, buy a horse, or *get a wife*, without a succession of go-betweens. Of course Abraham knew that this matter of the field could not be brought about without the intervention of the neighbours of Ephron, and therefore he applies to them first" ('Land and Book,' p. 579). **That he may give me the cave of Machpelah,**—Machpelah is regarded as a proper noun (Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch, Rosenmüller), as in ch. xlix. 30, though by others it is considered as an appellative, signifying that the cave was double (LXX., Vulgate), either as consisting of a cave within a cave (Hamerus), or of one cave exterior and another interior (Aben Ezra), or as having room for two bodies (Calvin), or as possessing two entrances (Jewish interpreters). It is probable the cave received its name from its peculiar form,—**which he hath** (Ephron's ownership of the cave is expressly recognised, and its situation is next described), **which is in the end of his field**—"so that the cession of it will not injure his property" (Wordsworth). At the same time Abraham makes it clear that an honest purchase is what he contemplates. **For as much money as it is worth**—literally, *for full silver* (1 Chron. xxi. 22). Cf. *siller* (Scotch) for money. This is the first mention of the use of the precious metals as a medium of exchange, though they must have been so employed at a very early period (*vide* ch. xiii. 2)—**he shall give it me for a possession of a burying-place amongst you.** The early Chaldæans were accustomed to bury their dead in strongly-constructed brick vaults. Those found at Mughheir are seven feet long, three feet seven inches broad, and five feet high, are composed of sun-dried bricks embedded in mud, and exhibit a remarkable form and construction of arch, resembling that occurring in Egyptian buildings and Scythian tombs, in which the successive layers of brick are made to overlap until they come so close that the aperture may be covered by a single brick (Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' vol. i. p. 86). In the absence of such artificial receptacles for the dead, the nearest substitute the patriarch could obtain was one of those natural grottoes which the limestone hills of Canaan so readily afforded.

Ver. 10.—**And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth.** Not *habitabat* (Vulgate), in the sense of resided amongst, but *sedebat*, *ἐκάθητο* (LXX.); was then present sitting amongst the townspeople (Rosenmüller), but whether in the capacity of a magistrate or councillor is not stated. **And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth,** even **of all that went in at the gate of his city,**—this does not imply that he was the chief magistrate (Keil), but only that he was a prominent citizen (Murphy). On the gate of the city as a place for transacting business *vide* ch. xix. 1—**saying**—

Ver. 11.—**Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee**—an Oriental mode of expressing willingness to sell. Ephron would make a present of cave and field to the patriarch,—"and just so have I had a hundred houses, and fields, and horses given to me" ('Land and Book,' p. 578,—the design being either to obtain a valuable compensation in return, or to preclude any abatement in the price (Keil), though possibly the offer to sell the entire field when he might have secured a good price for the cave alone was an indication of Ephron's good intention (Lange). At least it seems questionable to conclude that Ephron's generous phrases, which have now become formal and hollow courtesies indeed, meant no more in that simpler age when the ceremonies of intercourse were newer, and more truly reflected its spirit (Dykes, 'Abraham, the Friend of God,' p. 287). **In the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee** (literally, *have I given*, the transaction being viewed as finished): **bury thy dead.**

Vers. 12, 13.—**And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.** To express his sense of their kindness, and appreciation of Ephron's offer in particular; after which he courteously but firmly urged forward the contemplated purchase. **And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me.** Literally, *if thou, I would that thou wouldst hear me*, the two particles אִם and לוּ being conjoined to express the intensity of the speaker's desire. **I will give thee money for the field.** Literally, *money of the field*, i. e. the value of the field in money. This seems to indicate that Abraham at least imagined

Ephron's offer of the field and cave as a gift to be not wholly formal. Had he regarded Ephron as all the while desirous of a sale, he would not have employed, the language of entreaty. **Take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.**

Vers. 14, 15.—**And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver.** The word "shekel," from *shakal*, to weigh, here used for the first time, was not a stamped coin, but a piece of metal of definite weight, according to Exod. xxx. 13, equal to twenty gerahs, or beans, from *garar*, to roll. Coined money was unknown to the Hebrews until after the captivity. In the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. xv. 6) silver coins were struck bearing the inscription שקל ישראל. According to Josephus ('Ant.,' iii. 8, 2) the shekel in use in his day was equal to four Athenian drachmæ; and if, as is believed, these were one-fifth larger than the old shekels coined by Simon Maccabeus, the weight of the latter would be equal to three and one-third drachms, or two hundred grains, reckoning sixty grains to a drachm. It is impossible to ascertain the weight of the shekel current with the merchant in the time of Abraham; but reckoning it at a little less than 2*s.* 6*d.* sterling, the price of Ephron's field must have been somewhat under £50; a very considerable sum of money, which the Hittite merchant begins to depreciate by representing as a trifle, saying, **What is that betwixt me and thee?**—words which are still heard in the East on similar occasions (*vide* 'Land and Book,' p. 578)—**bury therefore thy dead.**

Ver. 16.—**And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron** (either as knowing that the price he asked was reasonable, or as being in no humour to bargain with him on the subject); **and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver,** —"Even this is still common; for although coins have now a definite name, size, and value, yet every merchant carries a small apparatus by which he weighs each coin to see that it has not been tampered with by Jewish Clippers" ('Land and Book,' p. 578) —**which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth** (the stipulation and the payment of the money were both made in the presence of witnesses), **four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant**—literally, *silver passing with the merchant*, or goer about, *i. e.* with merchandise; from *sachar*, to go about (cf. ἔμπορος, ἐμπορεύομαι). The Canaanites, of whom the Hittites were a branch, were among the earliest traders of antiquity (cf. Job xl. 30; Prov. xxxi. 24); and the silver bars employed as the medium of exchange in their mercantile transactions were probably stamped in some rude fashion to indicate their weight.

Vers. 17, 18.—**And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah,**—here the word is used as a proper name (*vide supra*)—**which was before Mamre,**—לִפְנֵי = over against (Lange), to the east of (Keil), the oak grove—**the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about,**—"In like manner the *specifications* in the contract are just such as are found in modern deeds. It is not enough that you purchase a well-known lot; the contract must mention everything that belongs to it, and certify that fountains or wells in it, trees upon it, &c., are sold with the field" ('Land and Book,' p. 578)—**were made sure**—literally, *stood up or arose*, i. e. were confirmed (cf. Levit. xxvii. 14, 19)—**unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.** "This also is true to life. When any sale is now to be effected in a town or village, the whole population gather about the parties at the usual place of concourse, around or near the gate where there is one. There all take part and enter into the pros and cons with as much earnestness as if it were their own individual affair. By these means the operation, in all its circumstances and details, is known to many witnesses, and the thing is made *sure* without any written contract" ('Land and Book,' p. 579).

Ver. 19.—**And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife**—with what funeral rites can only be conjectured. Monumental evidence attests that the practice of embalming the dead existed in Egypt in the reign of Amunophth I. (B.C. 1500), though probably originating earlier (Sharpe's 'Egypt,' vol. i. p. 31); and an examination of the Mugheir vaults for burying the dead shows that among the early Chaldæans it was customary to place the corpse upon a matting of reed spread upon a brick floor, the head being pillowed on a single sun-dried brick, and the body turned on its left side, the right arm falling towards the left, and the fingers resting on the edge of a copper bowl, usually placed on the palm of the left hand (*vide* Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' vol. i. p. 87)—**in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre.** In which also in succession his own remains and those of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah were deposited, Rachel alone of the great patriarchal family being absent. This last resting-place of Abraham and his sons, as of Sarah and her daughters, has been identified with *Ramet-el-Kalil*, an hour's journey to the north of Hebron (which is too distant), where the foundations of an ancient heathen temple are still pointed out as Abraham's house; but is more probably to be sought for in the Mohammedan mosque

Haram, built of colossal blocks, and situated on the mountain slope of Hebron towards the east (Robinson, Thomson, Stanley, Tristram), which, after having been for 600 years hermetically sealed against Europeans,—only three during that period having gained access to it in disguise,—was visited in 1862 by the Prince of Wales and party (*vide* Stanley, 'Lectures on Jewish Church,' App. ii.). **The same is Hebron in the land of Canaan** (*vide* ver. 2).

Ver. 20. — **And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the sons of Heth.** The palpable discrepancy between the statements of the Hebrew historian in this chapter concerning the patriarchal sepulchre and those of the Christian orator when addressing the Jewish Sanhedrim (Acts vii. 16) has been well characterised as *prægravis quædam et perardua, et quorundam judicio inextricabilis quæstio* (Pererius). Of course the Gordian knot of difficulty may be very readily cut by boldly asserting that a mistake has been committed somewhere; either by Stephen, the original speaker, under the impulse of emotion confounding the two entirely different stories of Abraham's purchase of Machpelah and Jacob's buying of the field near Shechem (Bede, Clarke, Lange, Kalisch, Alford, and others); or by Luke, the first recorder of the Martyr's Apology, who wrote not the *ipsissima verba* of the speech, but simply his own recollection of them (Jerome); or by some subsequent transcriber who had tampered with the original text, as, *e. g.*, inserting Ἀβραάμ, which Luke and Stephen both had omitted, as the nominative to ὠνήσατο (Beza, Calvin, Bishop Pearce). The last of these hypotheses would not indeed be fatal to the inspiration of the record; but the claims of either Luke or Stephen to be authoritative teachers on the subject of religion would be somewhat hard to maintain if it once were admitted that they had blundered on a plain point in their own national history. And yet it is doubtful if any of the proposed solutions of the problem is perfectly satisfactory; such as (1) that the two purchases of Abraham and Jacob are here intentionally, for the sake of brevity, compressed into one account (Bengel, Pererius, Willet, Hughes); or (2) that Abraham bought two graves, one at Hebron of Ephron the Hittite, as recorded by Moses, and another at Shechem of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem (Wordsworth); or (3) that the words "which Abraham bought for a sum of money" should be regarded as a parenthesis, and the sentence read as intimating that Jacob and the fathers were carried over into Shechem, and (afterwards) by the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem interred in Abraham's sepulchre at Hebron (Cajetan). Obvious difficulties attach to each of them; but the facts shine out clear enough in spite of the encompassing obscurity, viz., that Abraham bought a tomb at Hebron, in which first the dust of Sarah was deposited, and to which afterwards the bodies of himself, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were consigned, while Joseph and the twelve patriarchs, who all died in Egypt, were brought over to the promised land and buried in Jacob's field at Shechem.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—20.—*The death and burial of Sarah.* I. THE DEATH OF SARAH. 1. *The mournful event.* The death of—(1) An aged woman. "Sarah was an hundred and twenty-seven years old." (2) A distinguished princess. As the wife of Abraham and the mother of the promised seed, Sarah was doubly ennobled. (3) An eminent saint. Sarah, like her husband, was renowned for faith and piety; indeed in these respects only second to the mother of our Lord, whom she conspicuously typified, and proposed by the Holy Spirit as a pattern for Christian women. (4) A beloved wife. Sarah's married life extended over the greater part of a century, and the tender and constant love which gilded it with happiness through all the passing years shines on every page of the inspired narrative. (5) A revered parent. In the death of Sarah Isaac lost a loving and a much-loved mother. 2. *The attendant circumstances.* Sarah died—(1) In the land of Canaan. If not the place of her birth, Canaan had become the country of her adoption, and the scene of her spiritual nativity. A special sadness attaches to death upon a foreign shore, and among heathen peoples. Sarah may be said to have expired upon her own inheritance, and in Jehovah's land. (2) In the bosom of her family. If Sarah was not spared the anguish of dying in the absence of her noble husband, her latest moments, we may be sure, were soothed by the tender ministries of her gentle son. (3) In the exercise of faith. Sarah was one of those "all" who "died in faith," looking for a better country, even an heavenly. Hence the last enemy, we cannot doubt, was encountered with quiet fortitude and cheerful resignation.

II. The burial of Sarah. 1. *The days of mourning.* "Abraham came to mourn and to weep for Sarah." The sorrow of the patriarch was—(1) Appropriate and becoming. Lamentation for the dead agreeable to the instincts of nature and the dictates of religion. Witness Joseph (ch. l. 1), David (2 Sam. xii. 16), Job (ch. i. 20), the devout men of Jerusalem (Acts viii. 2), Christ (John xi. 35). (2) Intense and sincere. Though partaking of the nature of a public ceremonial, the patriarch's grief was none the less real and profound. Simulated sorrow is no less offensive than sinful. (3) Limited and restrained. If there is a time to mourn and a time to weep, there is also a time to cast aside the symbols of sorrow, and a time to refrain from tears. Nature and religion both require a moderate indulgence in the grief occasioned by bereavement. 2. *The purchase of a grave.* Here may be noted—(1) The polite request. Its object—a grave for a possession; its purpose—to bury his dead; its plea—his wandering and unsettled condition in the land. (2) The generous proposal; prefaced with respect, proffered with magnanimity; teaching us the respect owing neighbours, the honour due superiors, and the kindness which should be shown strangers. (3) The courteous refusal. Unwilling to acquiesce in the proposed arrangement, Abraham declines with much respectfulness (ver. 12), expresses his desire with greater clearness (ver. 13), and urgently requests the friendly intercession of the people of the land (ver. 8). Abraham's politeness a pattern for all. (4) The liberal donation. Ephron indicates his wish to bestow the cave upon the patriarch as a gift. Liberality a Christian virtue which may sometimes be learnt from the men of the world. (5) The completed purchase. Abraham weighs out the stipulated sum, neither depreciating Ephron's property nor asking an abatement in the price; an example for merchants and traders. (6) The acquired possession. The field and cave were made sure to Abraham for ever. The only thing on earth a man can really call his own is his grave. 3. *The last rites of sepulture.* "After this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah;" with unknown funeral rites, but certainly with reverence, with sadness, with hope.

Learn—1. The duty of preparing for death. 2. The propriety of moderate indulgence in grief. 3. The obligation resting on surviving relatives to carefully dispose of the lifeless bodies of the dead. 4. The wisdom of good men acquiring as soon as possible for themselves and their families a burial-place for a possession.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 19, 20.—*The death and burial of Sarah.* I. True religion sanctifies natural relationships. Those who know themselves blessed of God do not only feel that their human affections are precious and true, but do, in obedience to his will, preserve the greatest respect for their bodily frame, and for their dead who died in the Lord, and whose dust is committed tenderly to his keeping.

II. The people of God were upheld by faith in their care for the dead. They looked beyond the grave. Some say there is no evidence of the doctrine of immortality in the Old Testament until after the captivity. Surely Abraham's feelings were not those of one who *sorrowed without hope.* The purchase of the field, the securing possession for all time of the burying-place, pointed to faith, not the lack of it. Where there is no sense of immortality there is no reverence for the dead.

III. The purchase of the field was not only its security, but a testimony to the heathen that the people of God held in reverence both the memory of the dead and the rights of the living. All social prosperity has its root in religious life.—R.

Ver. 20.—*Lessons from the sepulchre.* "And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place." Abraham's first and only possession in Canaan, a sepulchre. The importance of the purchase appears in the careful narrative of the transaction. For himself he was content to live as a stranger and pilgrim (cf. 1 Pet. v. 7); but Sarah's death led him to acquire a burying-place. Declining the offer to use any of the sepulchres of the people of the land (cf. the separation at death between God's people and aliens), he bought the field and the cave, and carefully prepared the evidence of the purchase.

The purchase showed his faith in God's truth; one of the branches of Adam's temptation (Gen. iii. 4). It had been promised that his seed, after dwelling in a land not theirs, should return and possess that whereon he stood (cf. Jer. xxxii. 14, 15). Type of entrance into rest after pilgrimage (cf. 2 Cor. v. 1). It showed also his faith in a resurrection (cf. Ps. xvi. 10). The desire that he and his family should lie in the same sepulchre speaks of a life beyond the present. Parted by death, they were one family still. Sarah was to him "my dead." There was a link between them still. The living and dead still one family. Doctrine of communion of saints (cf. Matt. xxii. 32). Death was the gate of life (cf. 1 Thess. iv. 16). Canaan a type of the rest which remaineth; Abraham of the "children of the kingdom," pilgrims with a promise. No rest here. Life full of uncertainties. One thing sure, we must die. But—

I. WE ENTER THE HEAVENLY REST THROUGH DEATH; THE CITY OF GOD THROUGH THE VALLEY OF BACA. Here we walk by faith. Great and glorious promises for our encouragement, that we may not make our home here; yet we know not what we shall be. Sight cannot penetrate the curtain that separates time from eternity. Thus there is the trial, do we walk by faith or by sight? We instinctively shrink from death. It is connected in our mind with sorrow, with interruption of plans, with breaking up of loving companionship; but faith bids us sorrow not as those without hope. It reminds that it is the passing from what is defective and transitory to what is immortal. Here we are trained for the better things beyond, and our thoughts are turned to that sepulchre in which the victory over death was won; thence we see the Lord arising, the pledge of eternal life to all who will have it.

II. THE SEPULCHRE WAS MADE SURE TO ABRAHAM. In time he should enter it as one of the company gathered there to await the resurrection day; but meanwhile it was his. And if we look upon this as typical of our interest in the death of Christ, it speaks of comfort and trust. He took our nature that he might "taste death for every man." His grave is ours (2 Cor. v. 14). We are "buried with him," "planted together in the likeness of his death." The fact of his death is a possession that cannot be taken from us (Col. iii. 3, 4). He died that we might live. If frail man clings to the tomb of some dear one; if the heart is conscious of the link still enduring, shall we not rejoice in our union with him whose triumph makes us also more than conquerors?

III. THE FIELD AND CAVE. How small a part did Abraham possess in his lifetime, but it was an earnest of the whole; he felt it so, and in faith buried his dead (cf. Gen. l. 25; Heb. xi. 22). An earnest is all we possess here, but still we have an earnest. In the presence of the Lord (John xiv. 23), in the peace which he gives, in the spirit of adoption, we have the "substance of things hoped for," a real fragment and sample of the blessedness of heaven.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1.—**And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age**:—literally, *gone into days* (cf. ch. xviii. 11), being now about 140 (*vide* ch. xxv. 20)—**and the Lord**—*Jehovah*; not because the chapter is the exclusive composition of the Jehovist (Tuch, Bleek, Kalisch), but because the writer aims at showing how the God of redemption provided a bride for the heir of the promise (Hengstenberg)—**had blessed Abraham in all things.**

Vers. 2—4.—**And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had,**—literally, *to his servant, the old man*, ancient or elder, *of his house, the ruler over all which* (sc. belonged) *to him*. The term זָקֵן (an old man) is in most languages employed as a title of honour,—cf. *sheikh*, *senatus*, *γέρων*, *presbyter*, signor, seigneur, señor, sir (Gesenius, p. 252),—and is probably to be so understood here. Eliezer of Damascus, upwards of half a century previous regarded as heir presumptive to Abraham's house (ch. xv. 2), is commonly considered the official meant, though the point is of no importance—**Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: and I will make thee swear.** This ancient form of adjuration, which is mentioned again only in chap. xlvii. 29, and to which nothing analogous can elsewhere be discovered,—the practice alleged to exist among the modern Egyptian Bedouins of placing the hand upon the *membrum virile* in solemn forms of asseveration not forming an exact parallel,—was probably originated by the patriarch.

The thigh, as the source of posterity (cf. ch. xxxv. 11; xlvi. 26; Exod. i. 5), has been regarded as pointing to Abraham's future descendants (Keil, Kalisch, Lange), and in particular to Christ, the promised seed (Theodoret, Jerome, Augustine, Luther, Ainsworth, Bush, Wordsworth), and the oath to be equivalent to a swearing by him that was to come. By others the thigh has been viewed as euphemistically put for the generative organ, upon which the sign of circumcision was placed, and the oath as an adjuration by the sign of the covenant (Jonathan, Jarchi, Tuch). A third interpretation considers the thigh as symbolising lordship or authority, and the placing of the hand under it as tantamount to an oath of fealty and allegiance to a superior (Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller, Calvin, Murphy). Other explanations are modifications of the above. **By the Lord** (*Jehovah*; since the marriage to which this solemn adjuration was preliminary was not an ordinary alliance, such as might have taken place under the providence of Elohim, but the wedding of the heir of the promise), **the God of heaven, and the God of the earth** (a clause defining Jehovah as the supreme Lord of the universe, and therefore as the sole Arbiter of human destiny), **that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son**—not investing him with authority to provide a wife for Isaac in the event of death carrying him (Abraham) off before his son's marriage, but simply explaining the negative side of the commission with which he was about to be intrusted. If it evinced Isaac's gentle disposition and submissive piety, that though forty years of age he neither thought of marriage, but mourned in devout contemplation for his mother (Lange), nor offered resistance to his father's proposal, but suffered himself to be governed by a servant (Calvin), it was also quite in accordance with ancient practice that parents should dispose of their children in marriage (cf. ch. xxviii. 2)—**of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell.** Being prompted to this partly by that jealousy with which all pastoral tribes of Shemitic origin have been accustomed to guard the purity of their race by intermarriage (Dykes; cf. Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 591), and partly no doubt by his perception of the growing licentiousness of the Canaanites, as well as his knowledge of their predicted doom, though chiefly, it is probable, by a desire to preserve the purity of the promised seed. Intermarriage with the Canaanites was afterwards forbidden by the Mosaic legislation (Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3). **But** (literally, *for*, i. e. the former thing must not be done because this must be done) **thou shalt go unto my country** (not Ur of the Chaldees, but the region beyond the Euphrates generally), **and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.** Though enforced by religious considerations, this injunction to bring none but a relative for Isaac's bride "was in no sense a departure from established usages and social laws in regard to marriage" ('Land and Book,' p. 591).

Ver. 5.—**And the servant said unto him** (not having the same faith as his master), **Peradventure** (with perhaps a secret conviction that he ought to say, "Of a surety") **the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land.** *Primâ facie* it was a natural and reasonable hypothesis that the bride elect should demur to undertake a long and arduous journey to marry a husband she had never seen; accordingly, the ancient messenger desires to understand whether he might not be at liberty to act upon the other alternative. **Must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?** In reply to which the patriarch solemnly interdicts him from attempting to seduce his son, under any pretext whatever, to leave the land of promise.

Vers. 6—8.—**And Abraham said, Beware thou**—literally, *beware for thyself*, the pleonastic pronoun being added by way of emphasis (cf. ch. xii. 1; xxi. 16; xxii. 5)—**that thou bring not my son thither again.** Literally, *lest thou cause my son to return thither;* Abraham speaking of Isaac's going to Mesopotamia as a return, either because he regarded Isaac, though then unborn, as having come out with him from Mesopotamia, cf. Heb. vii. 10 (Wordsworth), or because he viewed himself and his descendants as a whole, as in ch. xv. 16 (Rosenmüller). **The Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the house of my kindred,**—*vide* ch. xii. 1. This was the first consideration that prevented the return of either himself or his son. Having emigrated from Mesopotamia in obedience to a call of Heaven, not without a like instruction were they at liberty to return—**and who spake unto me,**—*i. e.* honoured me with Divine communications (*vide supra*)—**and** (in particular) **that sware unto me,**—*vide* ch. xv. 17, 18; the covenant transaction therein recorded having all the force of an oath (cf. ch. xxii. 16)—**saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land.** Here was a second consideration that negatived the idea of Isaac's return,—he was the God-appointed heir of the soil,—and from this, in conjunction with the former, he argued that the Divine promise was certain of fulfilment, and that accordingly the mission for a bride would be successful. **He shall send his angel before thee,**—*i. e.* to lead and protect, as was afterwards promised to Israel (Exod. xxiii. 20), and to the Christian Church (Heb.

i. 14)—**and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence** (meaning, thy mission shall be successful). **And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then shalt thou be clear of this my oath** (*i. e.* at liberty to hold thyself as no longer under obligation in the matter; thy responsibility will at that point cease and determine): **only bring not my son thither again**—or, observing the order of the Hebrew words, *only my son bring not again to that place;* with almost feverish entreaty harping on the solemn refrain that on no account must Isaac leave the promised land, since in that would be the culmination of unbelief and disobedience.

Ver. 9.—**And the servant** (understanding the nature of his mission, and feeling satisfied on the points that impinged upon his conscience) **put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter**—to be true to his master and his mission, and to the hope and promise of the covenant.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—9.—*A bride for the heir.*—1. *Abraham and Eliezer, or the mission for the bride.* I. THE TRUSTY MESSENGER. 1. *His designation.* (1) From official position, a servant. (2) From venerable age, the old man or ancient of the house. (3) From superior dignity, the steward or ruler over Abraham's property. 2. *His qualification.* (1) Obedient, as became a slave or servant. (2) Faithful, as was required of a steward. (3) Prudent, as might have been expected of age.

II. THE IMPORTANT COMMISSION. 1. The *purport* of it. "To take a wife for Isaac." A step of greatest moment for the happiness of Isaac, the fulfilment of the promise, and the onward development of the Church. 2. The *reason* of it. (1) Abraham's advancing years. The patriarch was "gone into days," and had no time to waste if he desired to see Isaac well married before he followed Sarah to Machpelah. (2) Abraham's prosperous estate. "The Lord had blessed him in all things," left nothing that his soul could desire to complete the cup of his terrestrial happiness, except the wedding of his son to a godly partner. (3) Isaac's obvious disinclination to seek a wife for himself, his placid and pensive temperament disposing him rather to cling with mournful tenderness to the memory of a beloved mother than to anticipate the felicities of conjugal affection. (4) Eliezer's admirable fitness for the contemplated mission.

III. THE SOLEMN ADJURATION. 1. The *form* of the oath. "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh." For the significance of this ancient ceremony consult Exposition. 2. The *power* of the oath. This was derived from the character of the Divine Being—the Lord God of heaven and of earth—in whose presence it was taken, to whose witness it appealed, and whose wrath it invoked in case of failure to perform what was vowed. 3. The *tenor* of the oath. (1) Negative—not to marry Isaac to a daughter of the Canaanites, an already doomed race; and (2) positive—to seek a wife for Sarah's son among his kinsmen in Padan-aram, amongst whom as yet the knowledge of the true God was retained.

IV. THE REASONABLE APPREHENSION. 1. *Natural.* *A priori* there was little probability that a modest girl would consent on the invitation of a stranger to leave her home and kindred, accompany him into a distant land, and wed a man (even though a relative) whom she had never seen; and in a similar way reason can make out a case against almost every step in the distinctly Christian life as being unlikely, improbable, imprudent. 2. *Unbelieving.* The aged ambassador's anxiety was not shared in by the patriarch, whose faith had already reasoned out the successful termination of the contemplated expedition. And so again in the Christian life, difficulties which to sagacious reason appear insurmountable, to simple-minded faith cease to exist. 3. *Unnecessary.* When discovered and interrogated, the maiden was quite willing to become Isaac's bride. Many of the saint's fears are of his own making, like this of Abraham's servant, and in the end are found to have been superfluous.

V. THE RESOLUTE PROHIBITION. "Beware that thou bring not my son thither again." To do so would be—1. *To reverse the Divine call* which had brought the patriarch from Mesopotamia. 2. *To endanger the inheritance* by exposing Isaac to the temptation of remaining in Mesopotamia, should his wife prove unwilling to return.

Learn—1. The interest which should be taken by pious parents in the marriage of their children. 2. The care which should be exercised by those who marry to secure pious partners. 3. The lawfulness of imposing and taking oaths on important occasions, and for sufficient reasons. 4. The clearer sight which belongs to faith than to sense and reason. 5. The folly of anticipating difficulties that may never arise. 6. The danger of taking any step in life without Divine guidance or instruction. 7. The sin of renouncing one's religion for the sake of a wife.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxiv.—*The unfolding of the Divine purpose.* I. THE EXPANDED BLESSING. The first line of the web of sacred history stretches itself out to Mesopotamia. The aged patriarch, blessed of Jehovah in all things, is fading from our sight. We must look on a new generation and see the blessing expanded.

II. THE DIVINE GUIDANCE. The angel shall be sent before Isaac, and he will overrule the events and wills which seem to stand in the way. The marriage of Isaac was a matter of most solemn moment. The earthly bonds are blessed only when they are held up by the Divine covenant.

III. MAN'S FAITH REWARDED BY SPECIAL DIRECTION. The servant *prayed* for good speed, because it was in the spirit of *dependence upon Jehovah* that the whole errand was undertaken. We have no ground for expecting supernatural indications of the future, but when we commit our way unto the Lord we may ask him to show it. If it be well for us to see it beforehand, which it sometimes is not, he will send us "*kindness*" both in the occurrences and persons we meet.

IV. EARTHLY RELATIONSHIPS ARE UNDER HEAVEN'S SUPERINTENDENCE. The fair Mesopotamian is a suitable companion for the heir of the patriarch. She is full of graciousness and activity, free from pride, gentle, unsuspicious, generous, patient, self-sacrificing, benevolent. Such characteristics are what the children of God desire to transmit to their descendants. In the sight of so much that was lovely both in person and character, the servant held his peace with wondering thoughtfulness, waiting for and already anticipating the blessing of the Lord.

V. THE TRUE PIETY WATCHES FOR GOD AND WORSHIPS. On receiving the simple answer to his inquiry, and perceiving how the hand of the Lord had been guiding him, he *bowed his head and worshipped* (vers. 26, 27). Those who wait for "the mercy and the truth" will not be left destitute of it. Oh to be able at every step and stage of life to say, "*Blessed be the Lord!*" to hear the salutation rendered us, "*Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!*"

VI. GOD IN HISTORY. The kingdom of God had its points of connection from this moment with the thread of human affection, sanctified by the grace of God, uniting them together. The house of Abraham, the house of Bethel, are widely separated from one another in the measurement of space, but closely bound together henceforth by the spiritual ties of a common faith and obedience in the name of Jehovah. The same Divine purpose which directed the servant's way moved the heart of the damsel. "*She said, I will go.*" She went out of the midst of pure family affections; she was welcomed by one who saw her coming when he was "meditating in the field at eventide," doubtless in the spirit of prayerful expectation; and who took her to his mother Sarah's tent, where she might be sure one who so tenderly mourned the loss of a mother would know how to cherish a wife sent of God to comfort him. "He loved her." Religion is the only true guardian of domestic happiness, the only deep soil in which the affections flourish.—R.

Ver. 6.—*No turning back.* "And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again." Abraham's care to prevent the leaven of idolatry entering his family (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 33; James i. 27). Worldly wisdom would have led him to seek a wife for his son among the families of Canaan, so as to give him a firmer footing in the land; but he solemnly charged his steward, in sending him on a marriage embassy, not to do this (cf. 1 Kings xi. 3; 2 Cor. vi. 14). A wife was to be sought from his brother's

family. Out of the earnestness of this godly desire came the trial of his faith. An obvious difficulty; what if the damsel should not be willing to follow a stranger? There had been little intercourse between the families. The news in ch. xxii. 20 was plainly the first for many years. Must Isaac go in person to take a wife from her father's house? Much might be urged in favour of this. If the presence of Isaac were of importance, might he not return for a little, though Canaan was his appointed home? Was it not hindering the very thing Abraham desired, to refuse to do so? Was it not unreasonable to look for a blessing and yet to neglect obvious means for obtaining it? Not for a moment would Abraham listen to the suggestion. At God's call he had left Mesopotamia for ever. To send his son back would be contrary to the principle of his whole life. It would be to put expediency above faith, to distrust God's promise, to think his will changeable (cf. 1 Kings xiii. 19). Contrast the faithlessness of the Israelites in their wilderness journeys. Abraham would not allow even a temporary return. They "in their hearts turned back again into Egypt" (cf. Luke ix. 62).

I. In a godly life there is often a temptation to turn back for a little. With a laudable aim, some step which seems likely to lead to it is not quite what in itself we know to be right. To gain the means of doing good, some little departure from truth may seem almost necessary. In the eagerness of some plan of usefulness the time for prayer can hardly be found, or the ordinary daily duties of life seem to interrupt the greater and higher work; or, to gain an influence over the gay and worldly, it may seem the course of wisdom to go, a little way at least, with them. And is not a Christian, under the law of liberty, freed from strict observance of the letter? Does not that savour of the spirit of bondage? Nay, "to obey is better than sacrifice." Always danger when men seek to be wiser than God (Prov. xiv. 12). We cannot foresee the difficulties of returning.

II. True faith points to implicit obedience. Can we not trust God to order all—not only the ends towards which he would have us strive, but the means to be used? We are to live by every word of God, not by some special saying only. Promise and precept, instruction and direction, are alike his words, by which every step should be guided. It is want of faith which leads to departure from obedience; want of full trust in God which leads to ways of fancied wisdom. We have to do with efforts, not with results; these are in God's hand. Where obedience is not in question we rightly use our judgment; reason was given us to be our guide, but not to take the guidance out of God's hands.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 10.—**And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master,**—to bear the presents for the bride, to enhance the dignity of his mission, and to serve as a means of transport for the bride and her companions on the return journey. On the word *Gamal vide* ch. xii. 16—**and departed.** Either from Hebron (ch. xxiii. 19), or from the south country, near Beer-lahai-roi (ch. xxiv. 62). **For all the goods of his master** were **in his hand.** Literally, *and every good thing of his master in his hand;* meaning that he selected (*sc.* as presents for the bride) every best thing that belonged to his master —cf. 2 Kings viii. 9 (LXX., Vulgate, Murphy, Kalisch), though some regard it as explaining how he, the servant, was able to start upon his journey with such an equipage, viz., because, or for, he had supreme command over his master's household (Calvin, Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And he arose, and went**—if along the direct route, then "through Palestine along the west side of the Jordan and the lakes, into the Buk'ah, and out through the land of Hamath to the Euphrates, and thence" ('Land and Book,' p. 591)—**to Mesopotamia,**—*Aram-Naharaim,* i. e. the Aram of the two rivers; Aram meaning the high region, from *aram,* to be high—an ancient and domestic name for Syria, not altogether unknown to the Greeks; *vide* Hom., 'Il.,' ii. 783; Hes., 'Theog.,' 304; Strabo, xiii. 4 (Gesenius). Standing alone it signifies Western Syria (Judges iii. 10; 1 Kings x. 29; xi. 25; xv. 18), and especially Syria of Damascus (2 Sam. viii. 6; Isa. vii. 1, 8; Amos i. 5); when Mesopotamia is intended it is conjoined with *Naharaim* (upon Egyptian monuments Naharina; *vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. ii. pp. 32, 61, 67), the two rivers being the Tigris and the Euphrates, or *Padan,* the

field or plain, as in ch. xxv. 20. The latter is not an Elohistic expression as distinguished from the former, which some ascribe to the Jehovist (Knobel, *et alii*), but a more exact description of a portion of Mesopotamia, viz., of that where Laban dwelt. **Unto the city of Nahor**—*i. e.* Haran, or Charran (ch. xxviii. 10; *vide* ch. xi. 31). Nahor must have migrated thither either along with or shortly after Terah.

Ver. 11.—**And he made his camels to kneel down**—"a mode of expression taken from actual life. The action is literally kneeling; not stooping, sitting, or lying down on the side like a horse, but kneeling on his knees; and this the camel is taught to do from his youth" (Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 592)—**without the city by a well of water.** "In the East, where wells are scarce and water indispensable, the existence of a well or fountain determines the site of the village. The people build near it, but prefer to have it outside the city, to avoid the noise, dust, and confusion always occurring at it, especially if the place is on the highway" (*Ibid.*). **At the time of the evening,** *even* **the time that women go out to draw** *water*. Literally, *that women that draw go forth*. "It is the work of *females* in the East to draw water both morning and evening; and they may be seen going in groups to the wells, with their vessels on the hip or on the shoulder" (Roberts' 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 27). "About great cities men often carry water, both on donkeys and on their own backs; but in the country, among the unsophisticated natives, *women only* go to the well or the fountain; and often, when travelling, have I seen long files of them going and returning with their pitchers "at the time when women go out to draw water" (Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 592).

Vers. 12—14.—**And he said,**—commencing his search for the maiden by prayer, as he closes it with thanksgiving (ver. 26)—a beautiful example of piety and of the fruits of Abraham's care for the souls of his household, ch. xviii. 19 (Wordsworth)—**O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day.** Literally, *cause to meet* (or come before) *me*, i. e. what I wish, the maiden of whom I am in quest; hence εὐόδωσον ἐναντίον ἐμοῦ, make the way prosperous before me (LXX.); less accurately, *occurre obsecro mihi* (Vulgate). **And show kindness unto my master Abraham.** The personal humility and fidelity displayed by this aged servant are only less remarkable than the fervent piety and childlike faith which discover themselves in the method he adopts for finding the bride. Having cast the matter upon God by prayer, as a concern which specially belonged to him, he fixes upon a sign by which God should enable him to detect the bride designed for Isaac. **Behold, I stand here by the well of water;**—literally, *Behold me standing* (cf. ver. 43)—**and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water** (*vide* on ver. 11, and cf. ch. xxix. 9; Exod. ii. 16): **and let it come to pass that the damsel**—הַנַּעֲרָ, with the vowels of the Keri; the word used for Abraham's young men (cf. ch. xiv. 24; xviii. 7; *q. v.*). In the Pentateuch it occurs twenty-two times, without the feminine termination, meaning a girl (*vide* ch. xxiv. 16, 28, 55; xxxiv. 3, 12; Deut. xx. 15, &c.); a proof of the antiquity of the Pentateuch, and of this so-called Jehovistic section in particular, since in the latter books the distinction of sex is indicated by the affix ה being appended when a girl is intended ('Speaker's Commentary'); but this happens at least once in the Pentateuch (Deut. xxii. 19)—**to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also:**—the sign fixed upon was the kindly disposition of the maiden, which was to be evinced in a particular way, viz., by her not only acceding with promptitude to, but generously exceeding, his request. It is probable that the servant was led to choose this sign not by his own natural tact and prudence, but by that Divine inspiration and guidance of which he had been assured (ver. 7) before setting out on his important mission—**let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac.** "The three qualifications in the mind of this venerable domestic for a bride for his master's son are a pleasing exterior, a kindly disposition, and the approval of God" (Murphy). **And thereby**—ἐν τούτῳ (LXX.), *per hoc* (Vulgate); but rather, by her, *i. e.* the damsel—**shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.**

Ver. 15.—**And it came to pass** (not certainly by accident, but by Divine arrangement), **before he had done speaking, that,**—his prayer was answered (cf. Isa. lxv. 24; Dan. ix. 20, 21). From ver. 45 it appears that the servant's prayer was not articulately spoken, but offered "in his heart;" whence the LXX. add ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ αὐτοῦ—**behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother** (*vide* ch. xxii. 23), **with her pitcher**—the *cad* (cf. κάδος, *cadus*) was a pail for drawing water, which women were accustomed to carry on their shoulders; it was this sort of vessel Gideon's men employed (Judges vii. 20)—**upon her shoulder**—in exact correspondence with Oriental custom—the Egyptian and the negro carrying on the head, the Syrian on the shoulder or the

hip (*vide* Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 592).

Ver. 16.—**And the damsel was very fair to look upon.** Literally, *good of countenance*, like Sarah (ch. xii. 11) and Rachel (ch. xxix. 17; cf. ch. xxvi. 7 of Rebekah). **A virgin.** *Bethulah*, i. e. one separated and secluded from intercourse with men; from *bathal*, to seclude (cf. Deut. xxii. 23, 28; 2 Sam. xiii. 2, 18). **Neither had any man known her.** A repetition for the sake of emphasis, rather than because *bethulah* sometimes applies to a married woman (Joel i. 8). **And she went down to the well,**—"nearly all wells in the East are in wadys, and have steps down to the water" (Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 592)—**and filled her pitcher, and came up**—probably wholly unconscious of the old man's admiration, though by no means unprepared for his request, which immediately followed.

Vers. 17—19.—**And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher** (a request which was at once complied with). **And she said, Drink** (and with the utmost politeness), **my lord** (and with cheerful animation): **and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.** "Rebekah's address to the servant will be given you in the exact idiom by the first gentle Rebekah you ask water from; but I have never found any young lady so generous as this fair daughter of Bethuel" ('Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 592). **And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking**—thus proving that the kindly disposition within her bosom was "not simply the reflex of national customs, but the invisible sun beaming through her mind, and freely bringing forward the blossoms of sterling goodness" (Kalisch).

Ver. 20.—**And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough** (or gutter made of stone, with which wells were usually provided, and which were filled with water when animals required to drink), **and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.** "At one point we came upon a large village of nomade Bedouins dwelling in their black tents. For the first time we encountered a shepherd playing on his reeden pipe, and followed by his flock. He was leading them to a fountain, from which a maiden was meanwhile drawing water with a rope, and pouring it into a large stone trough. She was not so beautiful as Rebekah" ('In the Holy Land,' by Rev. A. Thomson, D.D. p. 198).

Ver. 21.—**And the man wondering at her**—gazing with attention on her (LXX., Vulgate, Gesenius, Fürst); amazed and astonished at her (Rosenmüller, Delitzsch, Keil, Lange, Calvin)—**held his peace, to wit**—*i. e.* that he might know—silence being the customary attitude for the soul in either expecting or receiving a Divine communication (cf. Levit. x. 3; Ps. xxxix. 2; Acts xi. 18)—**whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.** This inward rumination obviously took place while the whole scene was being enacted before his eyes—the beautiful young girl filling the water-troughs, and the thirsty camels sucking up the cooling drink. The loveliness of mind and body, both which he desired in Isaac's bride, was manifestly present in Rebekah; but still the questions remained to be determined, Was she one of Abraham's kindred? was she single? and would she follow him to Canaan?—points of moment to the solution of which he now proceeds.

Vers. 22—27.—**And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking,**—"If it is remembered that camels, though endowed in an almost marvellous degree with the power of enduring thirst, drink, when an opportunity offers, an enormous quantity of water, it will be acknowledged that the trouble to which the maiden cheerfully submitted required more than ordinary patience" (Kalisch)—**that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight,**—the נֶזֶם was neither a pendant for the ear (LXX., Vulgate) nor a jewel for the forehead (A.V., margin), but a ring for the nose (ver. 47), the side cartilage, and sometimes the central wall, of which was pierced for the purpose of admitting it (cf. Ezek. xvi. 11, 12). Such rings are still worn by Oriental women, and in particular "the nose-ring is now the usual engagement present among the Bedouins" (Delitzsch). The weight of that presented to Rebekah was one בֶּקַע, or half (*sc.* shekel), from בָּקַע, to divide—**and two bracelets for her hands of ten skekels weight of gold;**—the צָמִיד, from צָמַד, to bind or fasten, meant a circle of gold for the wrist or arm. So favourite an ornament is this of Oriental ladies, that sometimes the whole arm from wrist to elbow is covered with them; sometimes two or more are worn one above the other; and not unfrequently are they so numerous and heavy as almost to appear burdensome to the fair owners (Kalisch)—**and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?** The production of the bridal presents, and the tenor of the old man's inquiries, indicate that already he entertained the belief that he looked upon the object of his search. All dubiety was dispelled by Rebekah's answer. **And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah,**—to show that she was not descended from Nahor's

concubine (cf. ver. 15)—**which she bare unto Nahor.** This appears to have been the stage at which the jewels were presented (ver. 47). **She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.** It was now conclusively determined, by her answering all the pre-arranged criteria, that the Lord had heard his prayer and prospered his way, and that the heaven-appointed bride stood before him. **And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord.** The first verb expressing reverent inclination of the head, and the second complete prostration of the body, and both combining "to indicate the aged servant's deep thankfulness for the guidance of the Lord." **And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham** (on the import of בָּרוּךְ *vide* ch. ix. 26), **who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth:**—literally, *who hath not taken away his grace* (i.e. the free favour which bestows) *and his truth* (i. e. the faithfulness which implements promises) *from* (= from the house of, as in Exod. viii. 8, 25, 26; Gesenius) *my master* (cf. Ps. lvii. 3; cxv. 1; Prov. xx. 28)—**I being in the way, the Lord led** (or, hath led) **me to the house of my master's brethren.**

Ver. 28.—**And the damsel**—הַנַּעֲרָ (*vide* on ver. 16)—**ran** (leaving the venerable stranger in the act of devotion), **and told them of her mother's house**—a true touch of nature. With womanly instinct, discerning the possibility of a love-suit, she imparts the joyful intelligence neither to her brother nor to her father, but to her mother and the other females of the household, who lived separately from the men of the establishment—**these things**—in particular of the arrival of a messenger from Abraham. Perhaps also the nose-jewel would tell its own tale.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 10—28.—*A bride for the heir.*—2. *Eliezer and Rebekah, or the finding of the bride.* I. THE MATRIMONIAL EMBASSY. 1. *The departure from Hebron.* With promptitude and alacrity, as became a servant executing the instructions of a master—attended by a cavalcade of ten camels and their drivers, as ambassadors of princes are wont to signalise their dignity by ample retinues; and laden with the choicest of his master's goods as presents for the bride, since they who go to woo must not neglect to carry gifts—the venerable steward issued forth upon his mission. 2. *The journey northwards.* Up the Jordan valley towards "the Eye of the East" would probably be the route followed by Eliezer of Damascus; thence closely skirting the spot where in after years Tadmor in the wilderness arose with its palaces and temples, now magnificent in their ruins, till at length, crossing the Euphrates, he would reach Aram of the Two Rivers. 3. *The arrival at Haran.* If the time at which the patriarchal envoy reached the city of Nahor, viz., at sunset, when the maidens sally forth to draw, was an indication of the guiding hand of Providence, perhaps the spot at which he halted and partially unloaded his weary camels, viz., at the well, was a testimonial to his own shrewd sagacity, which discerned that for meeting with the virgins of the district, and in particular the females of Nahor's family, no better place could be selected than the city well, which was besides the customary resting-place for travellers.

II. THE PRAYER AT THE WELL. 1. *Its reverent humility.* Not only does he adore the Divine greatness, but, leaving himself altogether out of account, he bespeaks an interest in the Divine favour entirely as an act of kindness to his master. 2. *Its childlike simplicity.* He proposes a test by which he may be able to recognise the bride whom God has selected for his master's son. In doing so he practically casts the matter over upon God, asking him in the fashion indicated to point out the object of his search, thus exemplifying the very spirit of the Christian rule, "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God." 3. *Its immediate answer.* "Before he had done speaking, Rebekah came out" to the well, and acted precisely as he had desired that the bride should do. It was a striking illustration of the promise, "Whiles they are yet speaking I will hear."

III. THE MEETING WITH REBEKAH. 1. *A description of her person.* As to parentage, the daughter of Bethuel; in respect of condition, of virgin purity; with regard to appearance, very fair to look upon; concerning education, trained to domestic duties. 2. *An account of her kindness.* Coming up from the well, she graciously complies with the servant's request to be allowed to take a draught from

her pitcher. Then with winning sweetness she promptly offers to fill the stone troughs for his wearied animals. And finally, when asked her name, she with ingenuous frankness tells it, adding, in reply to a request for lodging, that in Bethuel's house there was not only room for himself and camels, but sumptuous hospitality for both. Such spontaneous acts of kindness to an unknown and aged stranger bespoke a tender and susceptible heart within the breast of the fair Rebekah. 3. *The impression which she made on Eliezer.* (1) Her appearance arrested him and made him run to meet her (ver. 17) with his pre-arranged request. Clearly this old man had a singular discernment of character as well as a quick eye for beauty. (2) Her kindness touched him, and made him silent in wonder (ver. 21), struck dumb with amazement at her minute fulfilment of every one of his stipulated conditions. (3) Her invitation overpowered him, causing him to bow his head and worship (ver. 26), acknowledging God's goodness in so quickly leading him to the house of his master's brethren, and so unmistakably pointing out the bride.

Learn—1. The fidelity and devotion to the interests of masters and mistresses which should be evinced by servants. 2. The spirit of prayer and supplication which Christians should display in all the perplexing and difficult paths of life. 3. The kind of brides which young men should select, viz., maidens distinguished by Rebekah's amiable and obliging disposition, even should they not be gifted with Rebekah's grace of form.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 21.—*Eliezer, or a wife-seeker.* "And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his way prosperous or not." "The man" spoken of was probably the Eliezer of Damascus mentioned in ch. xv. 2. He had been selected by Abraham to be his heir, but of course when Isaac was born he could not hold that position. He became honoured and trusted as "the eldest servant of (Abraham's) house, who ruled over all that he had" (ch. xxiv. 2). To him was committed the delicate business recorded in this chapter; and the way in which it was executed was just that which would be expected from one who had so won the confidence of Abraham as to be selected as heir. We cannot but admire the thoughtfulness of Abraham for his son. He sought to prevent Isaac from being brought under the polluting influence of the Canaanitish people in the midst of whom he dwelt. He also desired to prevent Isaac from going back to the country from which he had himself been Divinely led. Hence he sends his steward to select from among his kindred one who shall be a suitable life-companion for his son. He takes an oath of his steward that he will in no wise permit a wife to be taken from among the Canaanites, or lead Isaac to Mesopotamia again. The mission of Eliezer was indeed difficult and delicate. We must not think of it according to the customs of our land. In Oriental nations to this day it is the practice to employ a third person to negotiate a marriage between those who seem by report to be suitable for such relationship. Eliezer undertook the affair with every desire to gratify his master, and to serve well even the one who had supplanted him in heirship. We cannot too highly praise "the man" for his unselfishness, or too warmly admire the devoutness which characterised his whole conduct.

I. HE SEEKS BY PRAYER SUCCESS FROM GOD. The prayer recorded here was probably not the first offered with respect to the subject. His mission was not only delicate, but rather indefinite. He is sent to the relations of his master to choose from among them a wife for Isaac. He knows that much of the satisfaction of Abraham and welfare of Isaac will depend on his right performance of the duty. He feels the responsibility resting upon him, and makes every needful preparation for discharging it. He starts on the camels prepared, and carries with him presents suitable. After a long journey he arrives at a city in Mesopotamia where dwelt Nahor, his master's brother. It is eventide when he reaches the well outside the city. The graceful daughters of the city, with pitchers poised on their shoulders, are just coming forth to draw water for their households. The camels turn their long necks and weary eyes in the direction of the approaching maidens. They know that on their arrival the dry troughs, which only tantalised thirst, will be filled. The

shade from the palms avails not now to break the fierce rays of the sun setting so rapidly in the west. Long shadows are over the landscape. Eliezer stands with the golden light about him. He feels that this may be the moment of great import. Clasping firmly his hands, and lifting fervently his face heavenward, he breathes the beautiful prayer, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham." It was—1. Brief prayer, because there was not time to say much more, but it was most appropriate. He asked for what he felt he needed. He did not use prayer as a mere mystical method of pleasing God, but as the expression of a felt need. This is true prayer. God does not want fine words, long sentences, and wearying repetitions. None are heard for their much speaking. That is a heathenish notion. God is not glorified by the length of time we remain on our knees, or the number of things we can crowd into a certain time. The longest prayers are often the most unmeaning. This is true of prayers in the home and in the Church. Brief, earnest, sincere prayer is that which wings its way to heaven. When Peter was sinking in the waters his cry was brief and pointed enough: "Lord, save; I perish." 2. Eliezer did not hesitate to ask God's guidance in respect to a subject which many would have accounted as quite within the scope of their own judgment to decide. Many also would have thought it beneath the notice of God. Many would have made their way direct into the city to Nahor's house to choose for themselves. And many would have left the matter to be decided by chance; but Eliezer seeks guidance from God. Only those who are ignorant of the value of trifles, of their relative power, or who are ignorant of the fact that there are no trifles but which may become all-important circumstances, would think of such an affair as that Eliezer had in hand, as beneath God's notice. If not beneath God's notice, it may be the subject of prayer. Many who contemplate forming relationships might with the greatest advantage imitate the example of Eliezer in this case, and seek direction from God. Were this the practice there would be fewer unhappy marriages. Eliezer, in carrying out his master's wish, seeks success from God.

II. Notice how God overtakes our prayers. At the most opportune time the steward prays. He committed his way unto the Lord at the juncture when he felt he needed the guidance. God honours the man's trust. "It came to pass that before he had done speaking Rebekah came out." She was the very one whom God had appointed. She knew not that she was moving to fulfil the intention of God. In her acts and in her words she was doing that which was in harmony with the sign the man had asked. Courteously, on being asked for a draught from her vessel, she had offered even to draw for the camels also. In the first one addressed Eliezer had the answer to his prayer. Cf. Isa. lx. 54: "Before ye call I will answer," &c.; and Dan. ix. 23: "At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth." We lose much of the comfort of prayer because, after having put up a petition, we either forget to look for the answer, or because we have but a semi-belief in the power of prayer. If prayer be a reality to us, it is no less so in God's sight. Some put up prayers in the spirit which seems to say, "Now I will see whether God will answer that." God is not to be subject to mere testings. Christ showed that, when on earth he refused to gratify the curiosity or submit to the testings the Pharisees prepared for him. Where God is perfectly trusted the answer will, in some way or other, overtake, or even anticipate, the prayer.

III. See how the rapidity of the answer staggers belief. "He, wondering at her, held his peace," waiting to know whether the "Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." God had not only answered speedily, but in the manner desired. Sometimes he sends the answer, but in a way so different from that we expected, that we discern not the fact that we have an answer. But what heavenly telegraphy is here! No sooner the petition sent than the answer is given. The very correspondence between the sign desired and its rapid fulfilment only sets Eliezer speculating as to whether it may not have been simply a very remarkable coincidence rather than a Divine response. Meanwhile he acts as though he believed. He offers to Rebekah the gifts which indicated already his business. He offers such as shall become the character of his master, who was princely in his possessions as well as position. He offers and waits. The man "held his peace." He knows that if God has answered

in part he will also answer fully. God's dealings should always induce awe and patient waiting. He will often surprise us with the blessings of goodness. In our lives we have probably known like surprisingly rapid answers to prayer. We have even disbelieved in the answer. What if God had withdrawn the help or blessing given because received in such unbelief! There are times when we, like Eliezer, and like the Israelites on the shores of the Red Sea, have to be still and know that the Lord is God. Then God's action staggers belief.

IV. SEE HOW GRACIOUSLY GOD CONFIRMS HIS SERVANT'S WONDERING HOPE. Eliezer inquires of the maiden whether there is room in her father's house for him to lodge. After the manner of the Orientals, she readily replies, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." He follows Rebekah. Laban acts as host in place of his father Bethuel. He welcomes Eliezer heartily. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," &c. Eliezer enters and attends to the wants of his men and camels, but will not attend to his own until he has unburdened his mind. He tells of his errand, of the meeting with Rebekah at the well, of his praying, of the speedy answer, and of the sign fulfilled. Laban and Bethuel are surprised, and see in it God's hand. They say, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee good or ill." Then the man "bowed his head and worshipped." Rebekah consented to accompany him and become the wife of Isaac, his master's son. Everything fell out better than the steward could have expected; he could only see in it God's hand, God's mercy in guiding him and in confirming his hope.

1. God is as willing to answer us as to answer Eliezer of Damascus. 2. Prayer can overcome difficulties that seem insurmountable. When the cup of sorrow is not removed the strength is given to bear it, and so prayer is answered. If the way we expected does not open up in answer to our supplication, another and better is sure to be made plain. Prayer also "makes the darkened cloud withdraw." 3. When in the other world we look at our past life, we shall all see that God had answered all prayers that it would have been for our good to have answered, and that in others the withholdment has been kindliest response. There we shall "bow our heads and worship" him who made our earthly journey prosperous, and who had brought us to the "city which hath foundations." Whatever, then, our anxiety, trial, perplexity, let us lay all before God. If we are earnestly trying for the salvation of members of our own family, or for the advancement of God's kingdom, let us by prayer and supplication make our requests known to God, and he will send us an answer of peace, even as he did to Eliezer.—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 29.—**And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban.** "White," whose character has been considerably traduced, the Biblical narrative not representing him as "a monster of moral depravity," but rather as actuated by generous impulses and hospitable dispositions (Kalisch). **And Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.** That Laban, and not Bethuel, should have the prominence in all the subsequent transactions concerning Rebekah has been explained by the supposition that Bethuel was now dead (Josephus), but *vide* ver. 50; that he was altogether an insignificant character (Lange, Wordsworth); that firstborn sons enjoyed during their father's lifetime a portion of his authority, and even on important occasions represented him (Kalisch); that in those times it was usual for brothers to take a special interest in sisters' marriages—cf. ch. xxxiv. 13; Judges xxi. 22; 2 Sam. xiii. 22 (Rosenmüller, Michaelis).

Ver. 30.—**And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands** (*vide* ver. 22), **and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man** (this explains the cause of the action mentioned in the previous verse); **and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.**

Ver. 31.—**And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord.** בְּרוּךְ יְהוָֹה (cf. ch. xxvi. 29; Numb. xxiv. 9); the usual form being לַיהוָֹה (*vide* ch. xiv. 19; Ruth ii. 20; 1 Sam. xv. 13). Though Laban was an idolater (ch. xxxi. 30), it seems more satisfactory to regard him as belonging to a family in which the worship of Jehovah had originated, and by which it was still retained (Murphy, Wordsworth), than to suppose that he first learnt the name Jehovah from the servant's address (Keil, Lange, Hengstenberg).

Wherefore standest thou without? (as if his not accepting Rebekah's invitation were almost a reflection on the hospitality of the house of Abraham's kinsmen) **for** (literally, *and*, in expectation of thine arrival) **I have prepared the house,**—or, put the house in order, by clearing it from things in confusion (cf. Levit. xiv. 36)—**and room** (*i. e.* place) **for the camels.**

Ver. 32.—**And the man came into the house: and he** (*i. e.* Laban) **ungirded his** (literally, *the*) **camels, and gave straw**—cut up by threshing for fodder (cf. Job xxi. 18; Isa. xi. 7; lxv. 25)—**and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet** (cf. ch. xviii. 4; xix. 2), **and the men's feet that were with him**—the first intimation that any one accompanied the messenger, though that assistants were necessary is obvious from the narrative.

Ver. 33.—**And there was set**—*appositus est* (Vulgate); *i. e.* if the first word be taken, as in the Keri, as the hophal of שׂוּם; but if the Kethib be preferred, then וַיִּשֶׂם is the fut. Kal of יָשַׂם, signifying, "and he set;" *παρέθηκεν* (LXX.)—meat **before him to eat** (the crowning act of an Oriental reception): **but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand.** Oriental politeness deferred the interrogation of a guest till after he had supped ('Odyss.' iii. 69); but Abraham's servant hastened to communicate the nature of his message before partaking of the offered hospitality—an instance of self-forgetful zeal of which Christ was the highest example (*vide* Mark vi. 31; John iv. 34). **And he** (*i. e.* Laban) **said, Speak on.**

Vers. 34—49.—Availing himself of the privilege thus accorded, the faithful ambassador recounted the story of his master's prosperity, and of the birth of Isaac when Sarah his mother was old (literally, *after her old age*); of the oath which he had taken to seek a wife for his master's son among his master's kindred, and of the singularly providential manner in which he had been led to the discovery of the chosen bride. Then with solemn earnestness he asked for a decision. **And now if ye will deal kindly and truly**—literally, *if ye are doing*, i. e. are ready or willing to extend kindness and truth (cf. ver. 27)—**with** (or, to) **my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn** (literally, *and I will turn*) **to the right hand, or to the left**—in further prosecution of my mission, to seek in some other family a bride for my master's son.

Vers. 50—52.—**Then Laban and Bethuel** (*vide* on ver. 29) **answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord:**—*Jehovah* (*vide* on ver. 31)—**we cannot speak unto thee bad or good**—*i. e.* they could not demur to a proposal so clearly indicated by Divine providence; a proof of the underlying piety of those descendants of Nahor. **Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go,**—that the consent of the maiden is not asked was not owing to the fact that, according to ancient custom, Oriental women were at the absolute disposal, in respect of marriage, of their parents and elder brothers (Bush), but to the circumstance that already it had been tacitly given by her acceptance of the bridal presents (Kalisch), or, from her amiable and pious disposition, might be taken for granted, since she, no more than they, would resist the clearly-revealed will of Jehovah (Lange, Wordsworth)—**and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken.** Words which again kindled the flame of reverential piety in the old man's heart, so that **he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth**—literally, *he prostrated himself to the earth to Jehovah* (cf. ver. 26).

Vers. 53, 54.—**And the servant brought forth jewels**—literally, *vessels* (σκεύη, LXX.), the idea being that of things finished or completed; from כָּלָה, to finish (cf. ch. xxxi. 37; xlv. 20)—**of silver, and jewels** (or vessels) **of gold, and raiment,**—covering garments, *e. g.* the outer robes of Orientals (ch. xxxix. 12, 13, 15; xli. 42); especially precious ones (1 Kings xxii. 10)—**and gave them to Rebekah**—as betrothal presents, which are absolutely essential, and usually given with much ceremony before witnesses (*vide* 'Land and Book,' p. 593). **He gave also to her brother and to her mother** (here mentioned for the first time) **precious things.** מִגְדָּנֹת—from מֶגֶד, precious, occurring only elsewhere in 2 Chron. xxi. 3 and Ezek. i. 6; both times, as here, in connection with gold and silver—probably describes valuable articles in general. **And** (having thus formally concluded the engagement) **they did eat and drink,**—*i. e.* partook of the victuals which had been set before them at an earlier stage (ver. 33)—**he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night;**—literally, *and passed the night* (cf. ch. xix. 2; xxiv. 25)—**and they rose up in the morning** (indicative of alacrity and zeal), **and he said, Send me away unto my master**—being impatient to report to Abraham the success of his expedition.

Ver. 55.—**And her brother and her mother**—Laban as usual (ver. 50) having the first place; probably because of the prominence which from this time he assumes in the theocratic history—**said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least ten.** Literally, *days, at least* (Vulgate, *saltem*); as it were (LXX., ὡσεὶ); perhaps (Murphy); or (Fürst, Ewald, Kalisch); if she wish, with the idea of choice (Gesenius); *a ten*, or decade of days; the עָשׂוֹר being used as a measure

of time analogous to the שָׁבוּעַ or hebdomad. That ten months are meant (Chaldee, Arabic, Ainsworth) is probably incorrect. **After that she shall go.**

Vers. 56—60.—Still urging his suit for permission to depart, Laban and the mother of Rebekah proposed that the maiden should be left to decide a matter so important for her by her own inclinations. When consulted she expressed her readiness at once to accompany the venerable messenger to his distant home; and accordingly, without more delay, she was dismissed from her mother's tent, attended by a faithful nurse (ch. xxxv. 8) and enriched by the blessing of her pious relatives, who said unto her, **Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions** (literally, *our sister thou, become to thousands of myriads*, i. e. let thy descendants be very numerous), **and let thy seed possess the gate** (*vide* ch. xxii. 17) **of those which hate them.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 29—60.—*A bride for the heir.*—3. *Eliezer and Laban, or proposals for the bride.* I. THE HOSPITABLE BROTHER. 1. *The eager invitation.* "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!" (1) The speaker was Laban, Rebekah's brother, who on hearing his sister's call had hurried to the well. (2) The motive which impelled him was not unlikely a little greed of filthy lucre, the appetite for which a sight of Rebekah's jewels may have whetted; a little feeling of friendship, since he would learn from Rebekah that the stranger had come from Abraham; and a little sense of religion, as the family of Nahor appear still to have retained the knowledge of Jehovah. Most people's motives are mixed, and so probably were Laban's. 2. *The kindly reception.* (1) Eliezer's camels were unpacked, stalled, and fed—a proof of Laban's humanity (Prov. xii. 10). (2) His men's feet and his own were refreshed by washing—a necessary part of Oriental hospitality, evincing Laban's thoughtfulness (cf. Luke vii. 44). (3) Meat and drink were set before himself and his companions—the crowning act of an Eastern reception, showing that Laban and the other members of the household were accustomed to "use hospitality without grudging."

II. THE AGED WOOER. 1. *Impatient.* The nature of his mission urged him to despatch, as knowing well that his master was old, that Isaac was needful of a bride, that coy maidens are soonest caught by fervent suitors, and that successful wooing brooks no delay. 2. *Skilful.* The first recorded speech in the Bible, Eliezer's bride-wooing cannot fail to be admired for its wisdom. (1) He secures the sympathy of his auditors by declaring himself to be the servant of Abraham; (2) he details to them the wealth of his master, reasoning probably that no mother would ever think of sending away her daughter into a foreign country to be a poor man's bride; (3) he advances to the great religious consideration that Isaac's wife must be a worshipper of God; and (4) he narrates the singular providence that had pointed out Rebekah as the destined bride. 3. *Pious.* The religious character of this wooing is apparent from the reverent use of the Divine name throughout the old man's speech, the importance assigned to piety as one of the bride's qualifications, the devout recognition of God's hand in prospering his journey, and the impression he conveys that Jehovah has himself selected Rebekah.

III. THE CONSENTING RELATIVES. The acquiescence of Laban, Bethuel, and the mother of Rebekah was—1. *Unhesitatingly given.* "Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife." A little reluctance on their part would not have been surprising. 2. *Piously dictated.* "The thing proceedeth from the Lord!" Not the eligibility of the match, but the approbation of Heaven, secured their consent. 3. *Thankfully acknowledged.* "Abraham's servant worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth." How eminent the piety which traces every blessing to its primal source; how beautiful the religion which, the more it gets, the more it stoops! 4. *Richly rewarded.* "The servant brought forth jewels of silver," &c. (ver. 53). While adoring the original Giver, he did not neglect the second cause. Young men who receive fair Rebekahs in marriage should not forget to recompense with love and gifts the fathers and mothers who have given them up.

IV. THE WILLING MAIDEN. 1. *The proposed delay.* "Let the damsel abide with

us a few days, at least ten." This was natural, and would be convenient both for the preparation of the bride's trousseau and for the gratification of friends who might wish to bid her farewell. 2. *The urgent request.* "Hinder me not; send me away." The old man accepted his prosperity in wooing as an indication that God intended his immediate return. 3. *The important question.* "Wilt thou go with this man?" No maiden, however urged by relatives and friends, should contract a forced and unwilling marriage. 4. *The decisive answer.* "I will go." After this there could be no mistaking how Rebekah's heart inclined. It augured well for the coming marriage that it would prove a union of love, and not simply of convenience. 5. *The fraternal benediction.* "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions."

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 30.—*Laban's eye of greed.* "And when he saw the bracelets," &c. One thing moved Laban to offer hospitality to a stranger—the vision of gold on his sister's form.

I. COVETOUSNESS MAKES A MAN CALCULATING WHEN APPEARING TO BE GENEROUS. Laban had not been so pressingly urgent in his invitation if he had not cherished a hope of further advantages. He was a churlish man. He said, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," &c., because he saw that which was to him the greatest sign of blessing—wealth. Laban helped the more readily to ungird Eliezer's camels because he hoped thereby to loosen the girdle-purse of his visitor. He had the eye of greed. He could not see anything valuable belonging to another without wishing to possess it.

II. COVETOUSNESS MAKES A MAN, GENERALLY, SHORT-SIGHTED WITH RESPECT TO HIS OWN BEST INTERESTS. Laban gave Eliezer a bad impression of himself. The latter would soon see through such a man as Laban. He showed this when he gave presents not only to the sister and mother, but to the brother (ver. 53). He knew that it would not be advisable to overlook Laban. Eliezer knew he could be bought. Laban, when treating with Jacob, was just as short-sighted. He gave Leah and Rachel to Jacob as wives only after years of service for which he stipulated. He changed Jacob's wages ten times. Through his greed he at last lost Jacob. He confessed how great a helper Jacob had been. "The Lord hath blessed me for thy sake" (ch. xxx. 27). Jacob would not tarry with him, and even the daughters were glad enough to get away from such a father. Covetousness is opposed to our temporal and eternal interests. We lose by it the respect of others here and of God hereafter.

III. COVETOUSNESS IS EVER INDIFFERENT TO THE RIGHTFUL CLAIMS OF OTHERS. It will ignore those claims altogether, if possible. 1. We find Laban thus ignored the influence of his father throughout the whole transaction. Perhaps Bethuel was infirm or aged, but he is, consistently with the character of Laban, thrust into the background. Laban also takes all presents, and there is no mention of any being given to his father. 2. We find also he was in great measure indifferent to the happiness of his sister. He was subtle in tongue, and spoke of the Lord arranging things, but he believed in the arrangement because his family was the gainer. A good chance is offered by the Damascene stranger, and Rebekah soon saw that it was a foregone conclusion that she should go with him. Covetousness will make parents careless as to the physical, mental, and moral well-being of their children, and employers careless of the state of their servants. It is covetousness also that leads many to spread temptations, too strong to be resisted, before others, and one nation to get rich out of that which is sapping the life-blood of another.

IV. COVETOUSNESS NEVER SATISFIES, AND OFT MAKES MEN MOST MISERABLE. "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his house." "Envy is rottenness to the bones." Misers perish in the midst of plenty. Riches possessed, the desire for more is generally intensified. The desire is no more checked than a lamp is extinguished by added oil.

V. COVETOUSNESS IS SURE, SOONER OR LATER, TO BE REBUKED. The greed in Laban's eye which glistened at the sight of the golden ornaments on his

sister's form deepened with the passage of years. At last, in his pursuit of Jacob, he was rebuked by God in a vision, and afterwards by the man he had wronged. Learn, therefore, that medium prosperity is better than great riches gained by greed. Despise not the comforts of life, but live for something higher. What is gained in the world is speedily gone. If we gain much and ruin our souls, we shall not only be rejected by God, but shall bitterly condemn ourselves.—H.

Ver. 31.—*Laban, the solicitous host.* "Wherefore standest thou without?" The character of Laban has been well explained by Blunt in his 'Coincidences.' It is one of consistent greed. He was sincere in inviting Eliezer because he saw the bracelets on his sister's arm, and expected still further favours from a guest who can so lavishly bestow gifts. Christ asks us to enter his kingdom, but he expects nothing from us in return but love. We may adapt this inquiry of Laban to souls as yet outside the Church.

I. THE POSITION OCCUPIED. "Without." Probably they have no realised pardon, no enjoyment in religion, no future prospects of joy. Life is a dread mystery to them. They are saying, "Who will show us any good?" They may be just awakened spiritually, like the Philippian jailor. They may be under the condemnings of law and conscience, and in dread of the consequences of sin. Those within the true Church know in whom they have believed, and rejoice in forgiveness and the prospect of heaven. They are no longer outside the gates of mercy. We may be in a visible Church without being of Christ's fold. It is penitence, faith, and character that determine our position, and not birth, rank, or ceremonial observances.

II. THE REASONS WHEREFORE MANY RETAIN A POSITION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. 1. Accustomed to the state, and unwilling to change. They are like the prisoner who, after many years' imprisonment in the Bastile, was liberated, and went forth only to find all his friends gone and himself a mere burden to society. He went back and entreated to be allowed to retain his cell until he should pass out of the world. 2. Many, because they are ignorant of the fulness of Divine mercy. 3. Others, because they think there is so much to be done ere they can be fitted to be received within, and are looking to their own efforts to prepare themselves. 4. Many, because they fear their opportunity of admittance is past. 5. Others, because undecided as to whether they shall give up the pleasures of the world for the privileges of Christian fellowship. 6. Others, because they lack faith in their faith and its power to justify. 7. Many stand outside because they think themselves as secure outside as within. They forget that Christ demands open confession, and that to be united openly to his Church is one way of confessing his name before men. Let there be a personal and searching inquiry, "Wherefore standest *thou* without?" The invited guest passed within, and found his highest expectations more than realised, because God "had prospered his journey."—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 61.—**And Rebekah arose** (expressive of the promptitude, celerity, and decision of her departure), **and her damsels,**—probably a company, at least two, though Laban afterwards only gave each of his daughters one (ch. xxix. 24, 29)—**and they rode upon camels** (most likely those which Abraham's servant had brought), **and followed the man** (not in fear, but in hope): **and the servant took** (in the sense of undertook the charge of) **Rebekah** (who, in his eyes, would now be invested with additional charms, as his young master's intended bride), **and went his way**—returning by the road he came.

Ver. 62.—**And** (when the bridal train was nearing home) **Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi**;—Hagar's well (ch. xvi. 7, 14)—**for he dwelt in the south country**—on the Negeb (*vide* ch. xii. 9). Abraham may by this time have removed from Hebron; or, if Hebron be included in the south country, Isaac may have been only on a visit to Hagar's well (Lange).

Ver. 63.—**And Isaac went out to meditate**—לָשׂוּחַ; to think (LXX., Vulgate, Murphy, Kalisch); to pray (Onkelos, Samaritan, Kimchi, Luther, Keil); to lament (Knobel, Lange); doubtless to do all three, to commune with his heart and before God; not, however, about agricultural affairs, or the improvement of his property (Knobel), but concerning his deceased mother, whom he still mourned (ver. 67), though chiefly, it is probable, anent the marriage he contemplated (Keil)—**in the field at the eventide.** Liter-

ally, *at the turning of the evening* (cf. Deut. xxiii. 12; and for corresponding phrase, "when the morning draws on," Exod. xiv. 27; Judges xix. 26; Ps. xlvi. 6). **And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels** were **coming**. The bride's first glimpse of her intended spouse being, with artless simplicity though with dramatic picturesqueness, described in similar terms.

Ver. 64.—**And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw** (literally, *and she saw*, though as yet she did not know that it was) **Isaac, she lighted**—literally, *fell;* the word signifying a hasty descent (cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 23; 2 Kings v. 21); κατεπήδησεν (LXX.); *descendit* (Vulgate)—**off the camel**. "The behaviour of Rebekah was such as modern etiquette requires" (*vide* Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 593).

Ver. 65.—**For she** had **said** (literally, *and she said;* not before, but after alighting) **unto the servant** (of Abraham), **What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?**—Isaac having obviously hastened forward to give a welcome to his bride. On learning who it **was she took a veil**—"the cloak-like veil of Arabia" (Keil), which covers not merely the face, but, "like a kind of large wrapper, nearly the whole form, rendering it impossible to recognise the person" (Kalisch)—**and covered herself**. That married ladies did not always use the veil when travelling appears from the case of Sarah (ch. xx. 16); but that brides did not discover their faces to their intended husbands until after marriage may be inferred from the case of Leah (ch. xxix. 23, 25). Thus modestly attired, she meekly yields herself to one whom she had never before seen, in the confident persuasion that so Jehovah willed.

Ver. 67.—**And Isaac**—receiving an account (ver. 66) from his father's faithful ambassador of all things that he had done—**brought her into his mother Sarah's tent** (which must have been removed from Hebron as a precious relic of the family, if by this time they had changed their abode), **and took Rebekah, and she became his wife**—the primitive marriage ceremony consisting solely of a taking before witnesses (*vide* Ruth iv. 13). **And he loved her**. And he had every reason; for, besides being beautiful and kindly and pious, she had for his sake performed a heroic act of self-sacrifice, and, better still, had been both selected for and bestowed upon him by his own and his father's God. **And Isaac was comforted after his mother's** death. Literally, *after his mother;* the word *death* not being in the original, "as if the Holy Spirit would not conclude this beautiful and joyful narrative with a note of sorrow" (Wordsworth).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 61—67.—*A bride for the heir.*—4. *Rebekah and Isaac, or the wedding of the bride.* I. The pensive bridegroom. 1. *Mourning for his mother.* Isaac's meditation clearly includes this. Good mothers, when they die, should be deeply and affectionately sorrowed for by grateful and loving sons. A son who loves his mother living forgets not to lament her dead. The best testimonial of filial piety is to know that a son tenderly regards his mother while she lives, and cherishes her memory when she is gone. 2. *Musing on his bride.* This too the language will admit. Scarcely could the thought of Eliezer's mission be excluded from Isaac's mind. Doubtless he would often, during the interval of his absence, have his silent wonderings about its return with the God-provided spouse. Almost certainly too his prayers would ascend to heaven on her behalf. He who asks a wife from God is most likely to receive one, and he who frequently prays for the wife of his youth is most likely to love her when she comes. Note that Isaac's mournings and musings were in the field at eventide. While any place and time will suffice for heart exercises, some places and times are more suitable than others, and none more so than the solitude of nature and the darkening of eve.

II. The veiled bride. Springing from her camel at the sight of her intended husband, "she took a veil and covered herself." The actions indicated—1. *Rebekah's politeness.* Etiquette required both. It was satisfactory at least that Isaac was about to receive as his wife a lady, one acquainted with the gentle manners of the day. Refinement, while desirable in all, is specially beautiful in woman. Elegance of manners are only second to beauty of form in a bride. 2. *Rebekah's modesty.* Nothing can palliate immodesty in any, least of all in the gentler sex. Hence, not only should maidens be educated with the greatest possible attention to the cultivation of pure and delicate emotions, but nothing should ever tempt them to cast aside that shield of maidenly reserve which is one of their surest protections in the midst of life's dangers and seductions.

III. The primitive wedding. 1. *The giving of the bride.* This we can suppose

was performed by Eliezer, who, by his recital of "all things that he had done," practically certified that Rebekah was the maiden whom Jehovah had provided, and now in formal act handed over to him to be his wife. 2. *The taking of the bride.* "Isaac took Rebekah," *i. e.* publicly and solemnly accepted her in the presence of witnesses as his bride. Thus, without elaborate or expensive ceremonial, Rebekah "became his wife." 3. *The home-coming of the bride.* "Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent," and thus installed her in the honours as well as invested her with the privileges of matron of his house.

IV. THE HAPPY HOME. 1. Isaac *loved* Rebekah. "So ought husbands to love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephes. v. 28). It is their duty; it ought to be their happiness; it certainly will prove their interest. 2. Rebekah *comforted* Isaac. So ought wives not merely "to reverence their husbands" (Ephes. v. 33), but to soothe their sorrows, cure their cares, and dispel their despondencies.

Learn—1. That the son who sorrows for a mother will likely prove a husband that can love a wife. 2. That maidens' charms are most attractive when seen through a veil of modesty. 3. That those marriages are most auspicious which are made by God. 4. That those homes are happiest where husband and wife love and comfort one another.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 63.—*Isaac in the field.* "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide." Isaac was one of the less prominent among the patriarchs. He seems to have lacked energy of character, but there was great devoutness. His life was like a toned picture, lacking garish colouring, but having a depth of interest. Possibly the fact that an uplifted knife had once gleamed death upon him, and that he had so narrowly escaped, may have had great influence in giving a sober tinge to his life. Not only so, but training by such a father as Abraham must have inculcated a ready obedience to God's will, and a constant desire to know that will. In the passage above we have—

I. A GODLY HABIT INDICATED. "Went out to meditate"—to pray. There is a great difference between reverie and meditation. The one is aimless dreaming, the other, thought tending to an object. Prayer is the thought expressed. Meditation is the "nurse of prayer." Meditation stirs up the spiritual fire within. It brings us nearer to the Divine. It should be cultivated as a habit rather than be left to spasmodic impulses.

II. A PLACE WELL ADAPTED TO PRAYER SELECTED. The field or open country, where we can get away from men, is the place for fellowship with God. A free prospect lets God's power be more plainly seen. It is an advantage to get out to sea, and, leaning over the bulwark of a vessel, to realise the width of the world, the vastness of the universe and greatness of God. We should seek some place where we can specially realise the presence and power of God. "Enter into thy closet" is a command which many find it difficult to obey. At school, in business houses, there is little or no provision for solitary meditation; but with a book in hand the believer may in spirit get alone with God.

III. THE TIME CHOSEN FOR PRAYER WAS MOST FITTING. Isaac went into the field at eventide. When the fret and toil of the day were over; when the sun was setting, glorified by crimson clouds, or shaded by the purplish haze; when the blossoms were closing, and flocks were being folded; when the moon was just showing, and the stars beginning to shine out; when a hush was over nature and entering into the soul—then Isaac sought to pray; then he sought to realise the certainty of the Divine promises and the faithfulness of the Divine performance. The time accorded well with his own feelings. He still mourned for his mother (ver. 67). Sorrow makes solitude congenial. Moreover, he was anticipating a change of state. He knew his father had sent Eliezer to seek for him a wife from among his own kindred, and he may have been praying that God would send him a suitable partner for life. While he was praying the answer was approaching. By prayer Isaac was prepared also to bear with the selfishness and wrong-doing of others. In ch. xxvi. we see how he avoided quarrelling with the Philistines. Gentleness made him great, and that gentleness was intensified by prayer.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1.—**Then again Abraham took a wife,** —literally, *and Abraham added and took a wife* (i. e. a secondary wife, or concubine, *pilgash;* vide ver. 6 and 1 Chron. i. 28, 32); but whether after (Kalisch, Lange, Murphy) or before (Calvin, Keil, Alford, Bush) Sarah's death it is impossible to decide—**and her name was Keturah**—"Incense" (Gesenius); probably a servant in the family, as Hagar had been, though not Hagar herself (Targums), whom Abraham had recalled after Sarah's death (Lyra), since ver. 6 speaks of concubines.

Ver. 2.—**And she bare him** (since the patriarch's body at 100 years was practically dead, it is almost certain that his marriage with Keturah took place after the renewal of his powers; and it is easier to suppose that his physical vigour remained for some years after Sarah's death than that, with his former experience of concubinage, and his parental joy in the birth of Isaac, he should add a second wife while Sarah lived) **Zimran,** —identified with *Zabram,* west of Mecca, on the Red Sea (Knobel, Keil); or the *Zimareni,* in the interior of Arabia (Delitzsch, Kalisch) —**and Jokshan,**—the *Kassamitæ,* on the Red Sea (Knobel); or the Himarytish tribe Jakish, in Southern Arabia (Keil)—**and Medan, and Midian,**—*Modiana,* on the east of the Elamitic Gulf, and *Madiana,* north of this (Rosenmüller, Keil, Knobel)—**and Ishbak,**—perhaps preserved in Schobeck, in the land of the Edomites (Knobel, Keil)—**and Shuah**—for which the epithet Shuhite (Job ii. 11) may point to Northern Idumæa (Keil, Knobel, Kalisch).

Ver. 3.—**And Jokshan begat Sheba,**—probably the Sabeans: Job i. 15; vi. 19 (Keil) —**and Dedan**—probably the trading people mentioned in Jer. xxv. 23 (Keil). **And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim,**—who have been associated with the warlike tribe of the *Asir,* to the south of Hejas (Keil)—**and Letushim,**—the *Bann Leits* in Hejas (Keil)—**and Leummim**—the tribe *Bann Lâm,* which extended even to Babylon and Mesopotamia (Keil).

Ver. 4.—**And the sons of Midian; Ephah** (*vide* Isa. lx. 6), **and Epher** (Beni Ghifar in Hejas), **and Hanoch** (Hanakye, three days north of Medinah), **and Abidah, and Eldaah** —the tribes of Abide and Vadaa in the neighbourhood of Asir. Keil adds that all these identifications are uncertain. **All these** were **the children of Keturah**—six sons, seven grandsons, three great-grandsons; in all sixteen descendants.

Vers. 5, 6.—**And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.** *I. e.* constituted him his chief heir, according to previous Divine appointment (ch. xv. 4), and made over to him the bulk of his possessions (ch. xxiv. 36). **But unto the sons of the concubines** (Hagar and Keturah), **which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts,**—"doubtless established them as youthful nomads" (Lange) — **and sent them away from Isaac his son,**—Ishmael's dismissal took place long before (ch. xxi. 14); probably he then received his portion—**while he yet lived** (*i. e.* during Abraham's lifetime), **eastward, unto the east country** (or Arabia in the widest sense; to the east and south-east of Palestine).

Ver. 7.—**And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived,**—an impressive and appropriate expression for the computation of life (cf. ch. xlvii. 9)—**an hundred and threescore and fifteen years** —*i. e.* 175 years; so that he must have lived seventy-five years after Isaac's birth and thirty-eight years after Sarah's death. "His grandfather lived 148 years, his father 205, his son 180, and his grandson 147; so that his years were the full average of that period" (Murphy).

Vers. 8—10.—**Then Abraham gave up the ghost** (literally, *breathed out,* sc. the breath of life), **and died in a good old age,**—literally, *in a good hoary age,* i. e. "with a crown of righteousness upon his hoary head" (Hughes)—**an old man, and full** of **years.** Literally, *and satiated,* i. e. satisfied not merely with life and all its blessings, but with living. The three clauses give an elevated conception of the patriarch's life as that of one who had tasted all the sweets and realised all the ends of a mundane existence, and who accordingly was ripe and ready for transition to a higher sphere. **And was gathered to his people.** An expression similar to "going to his fathers" (ch. xv. 15, *q. v.*), and to "being gathered to one's fathers" (Judges ii. 10). "The phrase is constantly distinguished from departing this life and being buried, denotes the reunion in Sheol with friends who have gone before, and therefore presupposes faith in the personal continuance of a man after death" (Keil). Abraham died in the hope of a better country, even an heavenly (Heb. xi. 13—16). **And his sons Isaac and Ishmael**—Isaac as the heir takes precedence; but Ishmael, rather than the sons of Keturah, is associated with him at his father's funeral; probably because he was not so distant as they from Hebron (Lange), or because he was the subject of a special blessing, which they were not (Keil,

Murphy); or perhaps simply Ishmael and Isaac united as the eldest sons to perform the last rites to a parent they revered (Kalisch). "Funerals of parents are reconciliations of children (ch. xxxv. 29), and differences of contending religionists are often softened at the side of a grave" (Wordsworth)—**buried him** (*vide* on ch. xxiii. 19) **in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre** (*vide* on ch. xxiii. 3—20); **the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth** (a repetition which augments the importance of the statement that Abraham did not sleep in a borrowed tomb): **there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.**

Ver. 11.—**And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God**—*Elohim;* whence the preceding section is ascribed to the Elohist; but the general name of God is here employed because the statement partakes merely of the nature of an intimation that the Divine blessing descended upon Isaac by inheritance (Hengstenberg), and the particular blessing of which the historian speaks is not so much the spiritual and eternal blessings of the covenant, as the material and temporal prosperity with which Isaac, in comparison with other men, was enriched (Murphy)—**blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi** (*vide* ch. xvi. 14; xxiv. 62).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—11.—*The last days of Abraham.* I. Abraham's old age. 1. *The taking of a second wife.* (1) Her name: Keturah, recorded because of her relationship to Abraham. Connection with God's people confers honours as well as privileges. (2) Her marriage: of the second degree. Succeeding to Sarah's marriage bed, Keturah did not succeed to her social status. Neither did her issue possess legal claim to Abraham's inheritance. Concubinage, though permitted, was not necessarily approved by God. (3) Her children: numerous and (in some instances) distinguished. The common seed of the flesh may often be more enlarged than the special seed of grace; but the descendants of good men, other things being equal, are likelier to come to honour than the families of the wicked. 2. *The making of his will.* (1) Isaac, the son of Sarah, he constitutes his heir, in accordance with the Divine counsel, not attempting to interpose on behalf of Ishmael, his first-born. Primogeniture may involve certain rights in the world; it has no superiority in grace, or in the Church. (2) The sons of Hagar and Keturah he endows with portions from his ample pastoral wealth before he dies, and sends away to settle as independent nomads in the unoccupied territory lying on the east of Palestine, thus providing for the prosperity of his children and the peace of his family after he is gone—two things which pious parents should as far as possible secure before they die.

II. Abraham's death. 1. *Before death.* The age to which the patriarch had attained was—(1) Numerically great, viz., 175 years. Mark the tendency of piety to prolong life (Ps. xxxiv. 12). (2) Morally good. Neither beautiful nor desirable in itself, when associated with corresponding ripeness in grace old age is both delightful to look upon and pleasant to enjoy (Prov. xvi. 31). (3) Completely satisfying. He had experienced the Divine goodness and mercy for 175 years, had God's covenant established with himself and family, beheld Isaac born, married, and, the father of two promising sons, and seen Sarah away before him to the better land; now he had no desire left unfulfilled but one, viz., to depart. 2. *At death.* His end was peaceful; he "breathed out his spirit" into the hands of Jehovah. So did Isaac (ch. xxxv. 29), Jacob (ch. xlix. 33), David (Ps. xxxi. 5), Christ (Luke xxiii. 46). "Mark the perfect, and behold the upright" (Ps. xxxvii. 37). 3. *After death.* He was gathered to his people—a significant intimation of (1) the immateriality of the soul; (2) the conscious existence of the soul after death; (3) the gathering of pious souls into one society beyond the grave; (4) the mutual recognition of the glorified; (5) the complete separation of the righteous from the wicked.

III. Abraham's funeral. 1. *The chief mourners.* Whether Keturah's boys were present at the affecting ceremonial is not stated, but the prominent positions were occupied by Ishmael and Isaac. It is a duty which surviving children owe deceased parents to see their remains deposited with reverence in the grave, and it is beautiful when fraternal estrangements are removed round a father's tomb. 2. *The place of sepulture.* The cave of Machpelah had three attractions for the

patriarch: it was in the promised land, it was his own tomb, and it contained the dust of Sarah. 3. *The bereaved son.* Isaac, from his sensitive disposition and the unexciting character of his occupation, would feel his father's loss more keenly than Ishmael. Perhaps this explains the statement of ver. 11. It is God's special care to comfort orphans (Ps. xxvii. 10).

Learn—1. That though secondary wives are not agreeable to the word of God, second marriages are not against the will of God. 2. That good men ought to make a just disposition of their temporal affairs before they die. 3. That whether God's saints die soon or late, they are always satisfied with living. 4. That in whatever sort of tomb a saint's dust may lie, his immortal spirit goes to join the company of just men made perfect. 5. That the loss of earthly parents is more than compensated by the blessing of a father's God.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—18.—*The line of blessing.* Although Abraham has many descendants, he carefully distinguishes the line of the Divine blessing. His peaceful end at 175 years set the seal upon a long life of faith and fellowship with God. His two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, met at their father's grave, although living apart. The influence of such a character as Abraham's is very elevating and healing, even in the sphere of the world. Ishmael is not entirely forgotten, but Isaac, as the true heir of Abraham, hands on the blessing of the covenant.—R.

§ 8. The Generations of Ishmael (ch. xxv. 12—18).

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 12.—**Now these are the generations of Ishmael,**—the opening of a new section (cf. ch. ii. 4), in which the fortunes of Abraham's eldest son are briefly traced before proceeding with the main current of the history in the line of Isaac (cf. 1 Chron. i. 29—31)—**Abraham's son,**—because of his relation to Abraham it was that Ishmael attained subsequent historical development and importance (*vide* ch. xxi. 13)—**whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham** (*vide* ch. xvi. 1, 15).

Ver. 13.—**And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth;**—"Heights;" the *Nabathæans*, a people of Northern Arabia, possessed of abundant flocks (Isa. lx. 7), and, according to Diodorus, living by merchandise and rapine (Gesenius). From Petræa they subsequently extended as far as Babylon (Keil)—**and Kedar,**—"Black Skin;" the Cedrei of Pliny (Gesenius, Keil, Rosenmüller); characterised as good bowmen (Isa. xxi. 17), and dwelling between Arabia Petræa and Babylon—**and Adbeel,**—"Miracle of God" (Gesenius); of whom nothing is known—**and Mibsam,**—"Sweet Odour" (Gesenius); equally uncertain.

Ver. 14.—**And Mishma,**—"Hearing" (Gesenius); Masma (LXX., Vulgate); connected with the *Maisaimeneis*, north-east of Medina (Knobel)—**and Dumah,**—"Silence;" same as Stony Dumah, or Syrian Dumah, in Arabia, on the edge of the Syrian desert (Gesenius); mentioned in Isa. xxi. 11—**and Massa,**—"Burden;" north-east of Dumah are the *Massanoi*.

Ver. 15.—**Hadar,**—"Chamber" (Gesenius); Hadad (1 Chron. i. 30, LXX., Samaritan, and most MSS.); though Gesenius regards Hadar as probably the true reading in both places; identified with a tribe in Yemen (Gesenius); between Oman and Bahrein, a district renowned for its lancers (Keil)—**and Tema,**—"Desert" (Gesenius); Θαιμὰν (LXX.); the Θεμοί, on the Persian Gulf, or the tribe Bann Teim, in Hamasa (Knobel); a trading people (Job vi. 19; Isa. xxi. 14; Jer. xxv. 23)—**Jetur,**—"Enclosure" (Gesenius); the Itureans (Gesenius, Kalisch, Keil)—**Naphish,**—"Breathing" (Murphy); "Refreshment" (Gesenius); not yet identified—**and Kedemah**—"Eastward" (Gesenius); unknown.

Ver. 16.—**These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns,**—unwalled encampments, from *hatzar*, to surround; used of the movable villages of nomadic tribes (cf. Isa. xlii. 11)—**and by their castles;**—fortified keeps (Murphy); tent villages (Keil); nomadic camps (Kalisch). Cf. Num. xxxi. 10; 1 Chron. vi. 39; Ps. lxix. 26; Ezek. xxv. 4)—**twelve princes**—this does not imply that Ishmael had only twelve sons, like Israel—a very suspicious circumstance (De Wette); but only that these twelve became phylarchs (Hävernick).

The Egyptian dodecarchy rested on a like earlier division of names. Homer mentions a similar case among the Phœnicians ('Odyss.,' viii. 390); Thucydides another in ancient Attica (ii. 15); *vide* Hävernick's 'Introd.,' § 18—**according to their nations** (or tribe divisions).

Vers. 17, 18.—**And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years**:—a life shorter by nearly half a century than that of Isaac (ch. xxxv. 21); does this prove the life-prolonging influence of piety?—**and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people** (*vide* on ver. 8). **And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria** (*vide* ch. x. 29; xvi. 7): and **he died**—literally, *fell down;* not expired (Vulgate, à Lapide, Aben Ezra, *et alii*), but settled down, had his lot cast (Calvin, Keil, Kalisch); κατῴκησε (LXX.) —**in the presence of all his brethren** (a fulfilment of ch. xvi. 12).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 12—18.—*The generations of Ishmael, or the biography of a prince.* I. The prince's name. Ishmael. 1. The *significance* of his name. "God hears." It was thus a perpetual reminder to its bearer of a grand religious truth, that God is essentially a hearer of prayer, and that he is never far from any of his intelligent and needy creatures. 2. The *occasion* of his getting it. (1) Before his birth, because the Lord had heard the affliction of his mother. (2) At his birth, because his father believed the report of Hagar concerning the instruction of the angel. 3. The *verification* of his name. When he lay beneath the shrub God heard the voice of his distressful cry (ch. xxi. 17).

II. The prince's lineage. Abraham's son. That—(1) *Proclaimed his dignity.* Though not a prince in the Church, he was a prince in the world, being Abraham's immediate descendant. Grace runs not in the blood, earthly rank does. (2) *Bespoke his privilege.* Jehovah reckoned it a great thing for Ishmael that he was Abraham's seed. To be the offspring of those who are exalted in earthly station is a special honour, though not so great an honour as to be descended from those who are eminent in grace. (3) *Implied his responsibility.* Degrees of rank in society are of God's ordaining, and involve the recipients thereof in corresponding obligations (Luke xii. 48).

III. The prince's family. 1. *Princely in rank.* This quality they received by birth, being Ishmael's sons. 2. *Many in number.* They were twelve princes, and as such they developed into large and flourishing tribes and nations. This characteristic was due to grace, God having promised that kings and nations should spring from Hagar's son. 3. *Influential in power.* The twelve princes mentioned were powerful chieftains of as many clans.

IV. The prince's death. 1. *The time.* At 137 years. The days of all, even of princes, in this life are numbered. 2. *The manner.* "He expired." "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit" in the day of his death. 3. *The result.* "He was gathered unto his people," passing to the company of those who were like-minded with himself in the unseen world, as Abraham went to enjoy the society of those who were of kindred spirit with him.

V. The prince's dominions. "His lot was cast in the presence of all his brethren," *i. e.* his empire was—1. *Outside of Canaan.* He had no part or lot in the inheritance of Isaac. Neither have the world's princes as such any share in the heritage of heaven's peers. 2. *Among the tribes of earth.* And so the worldly man's portion is of the earth, earthy.

See—1. How comparatively unimportant the world's biographies are in the judgment of the Spirit. 2. How the children of the wicked often outnumber the offspring of the pious. 3. How it is appointed unto all men once to die, though not to all to die alike. 4. How certain it is that the wicked and the good shall be separated after death, since at death both are gathered unto their respective peoples. 5. How clearly and minutely God fulfils the promises he makes to wicked men no less than to good.

§ 9. The Generations of Isaac (ch. xxv 19—xxxv. 29).

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 19.—**And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son.** The usual formula for the opening of a new section (cf. ch. ii. 4). **Abraham begat Isaac.** A reiteration in perfect harmony not only with the style of the present narrative, but of ancient historiography in general; in this instance specially designed to connect the subsequent streams of Isaac's posterity with their original fountain-head in Abraham.

Ver. 20.—**And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife,**—the valuable chronological fact here stated for the first time proves that Isaac was married three years after his mother's death (cf. ch. xxiii. 1)—**the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian** (*vide* on ch. xxii. 23; xxiv. 29). Though a descendant of Arphaxad (ch. x. 24), Bethuel is styled a Syrian, or Aramæan, from the country of his adoption. On Padan-aram *vide* ch. xxiv. 10.

Ver. 21.—**And Isaac entreated**—from a root signifying to burn incense, hence to pray, implying, as some think (Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'), the use of incense in patriarchal worship; but perhaps only pointing to the fact that the prayers of the godly ascend like incense (Gesenius): cf. Tobit xii. 12; Acts x. 4. The word is commonly regarded as noting *precum multiplicationem, et vehementiam et perseverantiam* (Poole): cf. Ezek. xxxv. 13—**the Lord**—*Jehovah;* not because vers. 21—23 are the composition of the Jehovist (Tuch, Bleek, Davidson, *et alii*), but because the desired son was to be the heir of promise (Hengstenberg). The less frequent occurrence of the Divine name in the Thol'doth of Isaac than in those of Terah has been explained by the fact that the historical matter of the later portion furnishes less occasion for its introduction than that of the earlier; and the predominance of the name *Elohim* over that of *Jehovah* in the second stage of the patriarchal history has been partly ascribed to the employment after Abraham's time of such like equivalent expressions as "God of Abraham" and "God of my father" (Keil)—**for his wife,**—literally, *opposite to* his wife, *i. e.* beside his wife, placing himself opposite her, and conjoining his supplications with hers (Ainsworth, Bush); or, better, in behalf of his wife (LXX., Vulgate, Calvin, Keil, Kalisch), *i. e.* setting her over against him as the sole object to which he had regard in his intercessions (Luther)—**because she** was **barren:**—as Sarah had been before her (*vide* ch. xi. 30); the long-continued sterility of both having been designed to show partly that "children are the heritage of the Lord" (Ps. cxxvii. 3), but chiefly that the children of the promise were to be not simply the fruit of nature, but the gift of grace—**and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived** (cf. Rom. ix. 10).

Ver. 22.—**And the children struggled together within her.** The verb is expressive of a violent internal commotion, as if the unborn children had been dashing against one another in her womb. Cf. the story of Acrisius and Prœtus, who quarrelled before birth about their subsequent dominion (Apollod., II. ii. 1). *Vide* Rosenmüller, Scholia, *in loco.* **And she said, If** it be **so, why am I thus?** Literally, *If so, why thus* (am) *I?* Of obscure import, but probably meaning, "If so," *i. e.* if it is the case that I have conceived, "for what am I thus?" what is the reason of these unwonted sensations that accompany my pregnancy? (Aben Ezra, Calvin, Lange, Murphy); rather than, "If such be the sufferings of pregnancy, why did I seek to conceive?" (Rashi, Rosenmüller), or, why have I conceived? (Vulgate, Onkelos, Bush, Ainsworth), or, why do I yet live? (Syriac, Keil, Kalisch, Delitzsch). **And she went to inquire of the Lord.** Not by *Urim* (Bohlen), since this method of inquiring at the Deity did not then exist (Numb. xxvii. 21); but either through a prophet,—Shem (Luther), Melchisedeck (Jewish interpreters), Heber (Lyra); more likely Abraham (Grotius, Ainsworth, Wordsworth, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or Isaac, the prophet nearest her (Lange),—or through herself by prayer, as in Ps. xxxiv. 5 (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Lange, Murphy, Inglis). The language seems to imply that by this time there was a regularly-appointed place for the worship of God by prayer and sacrifice—Theodoret suggests the family altar; Delitzsch, Hagar's well.

Ver. 23.—**And the Lord said unto her,**—in a dream (Hävernick), a form of revelation peculiar to primitive times (ch. xv. 1; xx. 6; xxviii. 12; xxxvii. 5; xl. 5; xli. 1; xlvi. 2; cf. Job iv. 13; xxxiii. 15); but whether communicated directly to herself, or spoken through the medium of a prophet, the Divine response to her interrogation assumed an antistrophic and poetical form, in which she was informed that her unborn sons were to be the founders of two mighty nations, who, "unequal in power, should be divided in rivalry and antagonism from their youth"—**Two nations** are **in thy womb** (*i. e.* the ancestors and founders of two nations, viz., the Israelites and Idumeans), **and two manner of**

people shall be separated from thy bowels; —literally, *and two peoples from thy bowels* (or womb) *are separated*, i. e. proceeding from thy womb, they shall be divided from and against each other—**and** the one **people shall be stronger than** the other **people** (literally, *and people shall be stronger than people*, i. e. the one shall prevail over the other); **and the elder shall serve the younger**—*i. e.* the descendants of the elder shall be subject to those of the younger. *Vide* inspired comments on this oracle in Mal. i. 2, 3 and Rom. ix. 12—33.

Ver. 24.—**And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled,**—literally, *and were fulfilled her days to bring forth; ἐπληρώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ τεκεῖν αὐτήν* (LXX.; cf. Luke i. 57; ii. 6). Jarchi accounts for the different phrase used of Thamar (ch. xxxviii. 27), who also bore twins, by supposing that she had not completed her days, but gave birth to Pharez and Zarah in the seventh month (*vide* Rosenmüller, *in loco*)—**behold,** there were **twins in her womb** (cf. ch. xxxviii. 27, where the full form of the word for twins is given).

Ver. 25.—**And the first came out red,**—*Adhmoni, πυῤῥάκης* (LXX.), *rufus* (Vulgate), red-haired (Gesenius), of a reddish colour (Lange), containing an allusion to *Adham*, the red earth—**all over like an hairy garment.** Literally, *all of him as a cloak of hair* (not, as the LXX., Vulgate, *et alii*, all of him hairy, like a cloak); the fur cloak, or hair mantle, forming one notion (Gesenius). The appearance of the child's body, covered with an unusual quantity of red hair, was "a sign of excessive sensual vigour and wildness" (Keil), "a foreboding of the animal violence of his character" (Kalisch), "the indication of a passionate and precocious nature" (Murphy). **And they called his name Esau**—"the hairy one," from an unused root signifying to be covered with hair (Gesenius).

Ver. 26.—**And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel.** The inf. constr. standing for the finite verb (Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 304). Not simply followed close upon the heels of Esau (Kalisch), but seized Esau's heel, as if he would trip him up (Keil, Murphy). It has been contended (De Wette, Schumann, Knobel) that such an act was impossible, a work on obstetrics by Busch maintaining that an hour commonly intervenes between the birth of twins; but practitioners of eminence who have been consulted declare the act to be distinctly possible, and indeed it is well known that "a multitude of surprising phenomena are connected with births" (Hävernick), some of which are not greatly dissimilar to that which is here recorded. Delitzsch interprets the language as meaning only that the hand of Jacob reached out in the direction of his brother's heel, as if to grasp it; but Hosea xii. 3 explicitly asserts that he had his brother's heel by the hand while yet in his mother's womb. **And his name was called**—literally, *and he* (i. e. one) *called his name; καὶ ἐκάλεσε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ* (LXX.); *id circo appellavit eum* (Vulgate; cf. ch. xvi. 14; xxvii. 36)—**Jacob.** Not "Successor," like the Latin *secundus*, from *sequor* (Knobel, Kalisch); but "Heel-catcher" (Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Keil, Lange, Murphy), hence Supplanter (cf. ch. xxvii. 36). **And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.** Literally, *in the bearing of them*, the inf. constr. taking the case of its verb (*vide* Gesenius, § 133) = when she (the mother) bare them; *ὅτι ἔτεκεν αὐτοὺς Ῥεβέκκα* (LXX.); *quum nati sunt parvuli* (Vulgate); though, as Rebekah's name does not occur in the immediate context, and ילד is applied to the father (ch. iv. 18; x. 8, 13) as well as to the mother, the clause may be rendered *when he* (Isaac) *begat them* (Kalisch, Alford).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 19—26.—*The childless pair.* I. THE DISAPPOINTED HUSBAND. 1. *The grievous affliction.* Rebekah, the wife of Isaac, was barren. Though neither uncommon nor unjust, this was to Isaac (1) a specially severe affliction, from its long continuance, from his love for Rebekah, from his own natural desire of offspring, but chiefly from his faith in the promise; (2) a highly beneficial affliction, serving to instruct and discipline his faith as to the true character of the children of the promise, to refine and intensify his affection for Rebekah, to purify and elevate his own spiritual life, and to enable him to realise his complete dependence on the grace of God. 2. *The earnest intercession.* "Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife." Isaac's supplication was (1) directed to the right quarter, since "children are the heritage of the Lord;" (2) conceived in the right spirit, the word "entreated" implying earnest and repeated application to the heavenly throne; (3) stated in the right way, with plainness and simplicity of speech; and (4) seconded by the right helper, Rebekah, according to one reading of the text, joining her entreaties with her

husband's. Husbands and wives should be helpers, not hinderers, of each other's prayers. 3. *The gracious response.* "The Lord was entreated of Isaac, and Rebekah conceived." Note the character of God as the Hearer of prayer, the habitual practice of God, which is to listen to his people's supplications, the power which belongs to prayer of being able to prevail with God, and the special virtue which resides in united prayer (Matt. xviii. 19).

II. THE ANXIOUS WIFE. 1. *The unwonted experience.* In two respects the pregnancy of Rebekah was unusual. First, she had never conceived before; and secondly, the attendant sensations were uncommon. Great mercies are often accompanied by great discomforts to prevent gracious souls from resting in the gifts and neglecting the Giver. 2. *The remarkable interrogation.* "Rebekah went to inquire of the Lord." Her conduct was remarkable for the impatience it displayed, the piety it evinced, the faith it implied. If in her querulous exclamation there was sin, in her seeking to God with her anxiety there were grace and faith. 3. *The mysterious oracle.* This contained three distinct announcements: the first hopeful, that Rebekah should be the mother of twins; the second painful, that, besides being mutually antagonistic from their birth, her two sons should develop into hostile nations; the third unusual, that the elder should serve the younger.

III. THE HAPPY MOTHER. 1. *Her days were fulfilled.* A special mercy which pregnant mothers can appreciate. 2. *Her sons were born.* Another cause of rejoicing to a mother (John xvi. 21). (1) Their names. "Esau and Jacob." Names of men are sometimes prophetic of both character and condition. (2) Their birth: remarkable for the singular phenomenon by which it was accompanied. Jacob's holding of Esau's heel was intended to foreshadow the early character of Jacob, his future over-reaching of Esau, and his ultimate precedence in grace. *N.B* The first in nature is often last in grace. Between nature and grace there is perpetual antagonism. The great achievements of gracious souls have sometimes foreshadowings in nature. (3) Their appearance. Esau red like a hairy cloak; Jacob catching Esau's heel. The boy is oft the father of the man. 3. *Her husband was spared.* "Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them." A third mercy not always granted to mothers, to retain their husbands to participate in their maternal joys (1 Sam. iv. 19).

Learn—1. That children in a home are a special mark of Divine favour. 2. That anxious wives and mothers should carry their troubles to God's throne. 3. That the future histories and destinies of children are known to God, if not to their parents. 4. That mothers of families have peculiar joys as well as special sorrows.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 19—34.—*Divine purposes unfolded.* We are now entering a new stage of the sacred history, where we are looking less upon the development of one man's character than upon the unfolding purposes of Jehovah in the family with which he has made his covenant. Again we are in the region of—1. *Gracious interposition.* 2. *Supernatural assistance of human infirmity.* 3. *Prophetic announcements.* The atmosphere is that of the covenant. The children in the womb are two nations. The history of great peoples is anticipated.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 27.—**And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter,**—literally, *skilled in hunting;* εἰδὼς κυνηγεῖν (LXX.); *gnarus venandi* (Vulgate); a sportsman—**a man of the field;**—not a husbandman, *homo agricola* (Vulgate), who is differently denominated—*ish haadhamah* (ch. ix. 20); but one addicted to roaming through the fields in search of sport—ἀγροικὸς (LXX.); an indication of the rough, fiery nature and wild, adventurous life of the elder of the two brothers—**and Jacob was a plain man,**—תָּם = ἄπλαστος (LXX.); *simplex* (Vulgate); *integer*, i. e. *mitis*, of mild and gentle manners (Rosenmüller); blameless, as a shepherd (Knobel); pious (Luther); righteous (Kalisch); obviously intended to describe Jacob as, both in character and life, the antithesis of Esau—**dwelling in tents**—*i. e.* loving to stay at home, as opposed to Esau, who loved to wander afield;

preferring a quiet, peaceable, domestic, and pious manner of existence to a life of "excitement, adventure, and danger," such as captivated Esau.

Ver. 28.—**And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison**:—literally, *because his hunting* (i.e. its produce) *was in his mouth; ὅτι ἡ θήρα αὐτοῦ βρῶσις αὐτῷ* (LXX.); not perhaps the sole reason for Isaac's preference of Esau, though mentioned here because of its connection with the ensuing narrative. Persons of quiet and retiring disposition, like Isaac, are often fascinated by those of more sparkling and energetic temperament, such as Esau; mothers, on the other hand, are mostly drawn towards children that are gentle in disposition and home-keeping in habit. Accordingly it is added—**but Rebekah loved Jacob.**

Ver. 29.—**And Jacob sod pottage**:—literally, *cooked something cooked; ἥψησε δὲ Ἰακὼβ ἕψημα* (LXX.); prepared boiled food, of lentiles (*vide* on ver. 34)—**and Esau came from the field, and he was faint**—exhausted, the term being used of one who is both wearied and languishing (cf. Job xxii. 7; Ps. lxiii. 2; Prov. xxv. 25).

Ver. 30.—**And Esau said unto Jacob, Feed me** (literally, *let me swallow*, an expression for eating greedily), **I pray thee, with that same red** pottage;—literally, *of that red, red* (*sc.* pottage), or thing, in his excitement forgetting the name of the dish (Knobel), or indicative of the haste produced by his voracious appetite (Wordsworth, Luther), though the duplication of the term *red* has been explained as a witty play upon the resemblance of the lentil broth to his own red skin, as thus: "Feed with that red me the red one" (Lange)—**for I am faint** (*vide supra*, ver. 29): **therefore was his name called Edom**—*i. e.* red. "There is no discrepancy in ascribing his name both to his complexion and the colour of the lentil broth. The propriety of a name may surely be marked by different circumstances" (A. G. in Lange). The Arabians are fond of giving surnames of that kind to famous persons. Cf. *Akil-al Murar*, which was given to Hodjr, king of the Kendites, owing to his wife saying in a passion, "He is like a camel that devours bushes" (*vide* Hävernick, 'Introduction,' § 18).

Ver. 31.—**And Jacob said, Sell me this day**—literally, *as the day;* as clearly as the day (Jarchi, Kimchi, Drusius); immediately, *statim* (Rosenmüller); perhaps simply today, *σήμερον* (LXX., Glassius, Gesenius, Kalisch; cf. 1 Sam. ix. 13, 27; 1 Kings i. 49)—**thy birthright.** The right of primogeniture in the family of Abraham implied (1) succession to the earthly inheritance of Canaan; (2) possession of the covenant blessing transmitted through the paternal benediction; and (3) progenitorship of the promised seed. Under the Mosaic institute the privileges of the firstborn were clearly defined. They involved succession to (1) the official authority of the father; (2) a double portion of the father's property; and (3) the functions of the domestic priesthood (*vide* ch. xxvii. 4, 19, 27—29; xlix. 3; Exod. xxii. 29; Numb. viii. 14—17; Deut. xxi. 17).

Ver. 32.—**And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die**:—literally, *going to die;* meaning, "on the eve of expiring," through hunger; "*ex animo testetur se mortis sensu urgeri*" (Calvin); or, "liable to death," through the dangerous pursuits of his daily calling (Ainsworth, Bush, Rosenmüller); or, what is most probable, "on the way to meet death"—uttered in a spirit of Epicurean levity, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" (Keil, Kalisch)—**and what profit shall this birthright do to me?**—literally, *of what* (use) *this* (thing) *to me*, (called) *a birthright?* signifying, according to the sense attached to the foregoing expression, either, Of what use can a birthright be to a man dying of starvation? or, The birthright is not likely ever to be of service to me, who am almost certain to be cut off soon by a violent and sudden death; or, What signifies a birthright whose enjoyment is all in the future to a man who has only a short time to live? I prefer present gratifications to deferred felicities.

Ver. 33.—**And Jacob said, Swear to me this day.** On the expression "this day" *vide supra*, ver. 31. The conduct of Jacob in this transaction is difficult to defend Though aware of the heavenly oracle that assigned to him the precedence in his father's house, he was far from being justified in endeavouring, by "cautious, prudent, and conciliatory proposals" (Murphy), but rather by unbelieving impatience, despicable meanness, and miserable craft, to anticipate Divine providence, which in due time without his assistance would have implemented its own designs. **And he sware unto him.** If Jacob's demand of an oath evinced ungenerous suspicion, Esau's giving of an oath showed a low sense of honour (Lange). **And he sold his birthright unto Jacob**—thus meriting the appellation of *βέβηλος* (Heb. xii. 16).

Ver. 34.—**Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles.** "Lentiles (עֲדָשִׁים; *Ervum lens*) were and are extensively and carefully grown in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine (2 Sam. xvii. 28; xxiii. 11); those of Egypt were, at a later period particularly famous; and the manner of cooking them is even immortalised on monuments" (Kalisch). "The lentil does not grow more than six or eight inches high, and is pulled like flax, not cut with the sickle. When green it resembles

an incipient pea-vine, only the leaves are differently arranged, smaller and more delicate—somewhat like those of the mimosa, or sensitive plant" (Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 596). **And he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way.** A graphic portrait of an utterly carnal mind, which lives solely in and for the immediate gratification of appetite. **Thus Esau despised his birthright**—and thus Scripture both proclaims his guilt and describes his offence.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 27—34.—*The twin brothers.* I. THE GROWING LADS. 1. *Diverse in daily calling.* Esau elected to follow the adventurous and roving life of a hunter; Jacob, the simpler and less exciting occupation of keeping sheep. The principles that guided their respective choices are not explained; but, like the selection of trades by other inexperienced youths, these were doubtless due to physical constitution, mental temperament, the influence of example, the effect of parental counsel, and above all the over-ruling providence of God. Cf. Cain and Abel (ch. iv. 2). 2. *Unlike in personal character.* Esau was a wild man in disposition no less than in action, a youth of strong animal propensities and essentially mundane proclivities. Jacob, without being religious, was quiet, sedate, fond of home life, and studious of peace, though not without a vein of duplicity in his soul's texture. This diversity in character, not due to parentage, birth, or education, which in both were alike, modern science would explain by molecular arrangement. Biblical theology goes a step behind, and traces it to God (Rom. ix. 11). 3. *Divided in parental favour.* Esau was loved by Isaac, Jacob by Rebekah. Besides being sinful in itself—scarcely anything can justify partiality in parental affection—the conduct of Isaac and Rebekah was more than likely hurtful to the lads, leaving on their consciences a sense of injustice, estranging them from each other in fraternal regard, and helping them unconsciously to fulfil the untoward destiny of mutual rivalry and jealousy already predicted for them.

II. THE TIRED HUNTER. 1. *His famishing condition.* If Esau was really faint, it indicated too great eagerness in following his sports. Even in honourable callings and profitable pursuits moderation is a duty. Rom. xii. 11 will assist traders and merchants to preserve the golden mean between slothfulness and slavishness in business. If Esau was not really faint, but only fatigued and hungry, it was an instance of exaggerated talking which with some is common, but by all should be avoided. 2. *His ravenous request.* This indicated an impatient spirit, which the words attempt to reproduce—a spirit characteristic of ill-balanced natures, resulting in most instances from unsubdued selfishness, betraying frequently into sins and faults that might otherwise be avoided, and at all times ill-befitting noble souls and renewed hearts. It also discovered a gluttonous appetite. The glutton's god is his belly, the glutton's temple his kitchen, the glutton's high priest his cook, the glutton's ritual, Let us eat and drink. Let saints beware of gluttony (Prov. xxiii. 2).

III. THE DESPISED BIRTHRIGHT. 1. *The base proposal.* "Sell me this day thy birthright." Jacob's desire to deprive Esau of his right of primogeniture was envious, unbrotherly, and, in the light of the pre-natal oracle, impatient and unbelieving. The conditions of sale were mean, exacting, and selfish. That Jacob's conduct was the fruit of grace or faith is difficult to credit, though God, who often works with despicable instruments, over-ruled it for the accomplishment of his own designs. 2. *The foolish answer.* "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" An ejaculation discovering both contempt for spiritual and doubt of future things; the very essence of epicureanism, whether ancient or modern. 3. *The unholy oath.* "Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him." On the part of both giver and receiver this was wrong. Neither had Esau right to part with his birthright until God in his providence took it from him; nor had Jacob the right to accept that birthright until God transferred it to his hands. 4. *The unequal exchange.* Jacob got the birthright; Esau got the pottage. Esau the type of many who accept the devil's bargain of the world (mostly an infinitesimal fragment of it) for a soul.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 27.—The "*cunning hunter*" is set over against the "*plain man dwelling in tents.*" I. THE TWO KINGDOMS, that of *material force* and that of *moral power*, are thus represented in contrast and rivalry.

II. GOD'S WAYS AND MAN'S WAYS CONTRASTED. The partialities of the parents foster the special faults of the children. *Esau* is *more* the *man of fleshly impulse* because Isaac loved him for his venison. *Jacob* is *more* the *crafty supplanter* because Rebekah by her favouritism encouraged him to take advantage of his brother.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME LIFE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER. The sins of parents are generally in some form transmitted to children. *Esau's* new name was *Edom*, memento of his selfish succumbing to appetite. *Jacob's* new name was *Israel*, memento of the victory which by the grace of God he obtained. "*Esau despised his birthright.*" It was the natural working of a sensual nature. We begin by yielding to the lower impulses without thinking how they bind their cords round us. At last we lose the power of distinguishing a mere passing evil from an overwhelming danger, and when we ought to fight, cry, *I am at the point to die*; then in wretched collapse all goes. What is this birthright, *what profit?* 1. *The loss of the sense of responsibility.* 2. *The absorbing hunger after present gratification.* 3. *The blindness to all proportion in life.* 4. The *dulness and stupidity* of the animalism which does not even care for the very birthright itself, though it is an earthly advantage. These are the *fearful payments* which they have to render who, like Esau, give themselves up to a mere *life of the flesh.*—R.

Ver. 32.—*Esau, the spiritually indifferent.* "What profit shall the birthright do to me?" There was very much in Esau which would be greatly admired. He was of good humour, off-handed, manly, open, daring, and fond of field sports. He, and not Jacob, would in society have carried off the palm. He was a fair sample of a worldling. He knew nothing of the consecration of heart to God, or of spiritual aspirations. In the narrative we see how he showed indifference to the birthright, which carried with it certain spiritual advantages. He came in faint from the field, and the wafted odour of Jacob's savoury lentils filled him with longing. For a share in a mess of pottage he parted with his birthright.

I. THE UNRENEWED HEART ALWAYS UNDERVALUES MATERIAL, NATURAL, AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. We may enjoy all the blessings God may shower upon us and not think of them as coming from God. We undervalue the gift of *life*, and the various means by which God has arranged that life shall be sustained. Then we forget that God preserves to us reason and the power of acquiring knowledge. But there are spiritual advantages analogous to those which Esau despised which we may treat indifferently. 1. Authority and honour as the firstborn. 2. A double portion of his father's possessions. 3. The privilege of the priesthood. Evidently the eldest son acted as the priest of the family in offering the sacrifices, and the priestly garb was kept for him. It was this that Rebekah had by her, and which she put on Jacob to deceive Isaac. 4. The peculiar blessing of his father, which was bestowed with solemnity. A covenant was ratified by eating, and hence Isaac sent out Esau to prepare venison; but Rebekah forestalled him. 5. Included in that blessing of Isaac was the promise made by God to Abraham, and which was to be handed on from one generation to another. It was for this Jacob longed. He rightly appraised the spiritual advantages connected with it. Though there was much that was mean in his character at first, he had these spiritual desires and faith in God not possessed by his brother. These brothers were twins, yet how diverse their character. It may have been that Jacob, knowing he was of equal age, felt he had an equal right to be accounted the firstborn. This may be said by way of excuse for that which otherwise would appear outrageous and mean. Probably when Esau said he was "at the point of death" he only meant it in the same way that we say "we are dying of hunger." Jacob asked the transfer because he knew his brother cared little about it, and because he may have heard him express his indifference to it. Jacob could not have taken it by violence, and Esau should have refused the suggestion with an

emphatic "no;" say, "I will rather die than part with that." Esau may have even smiled at Jacob for caring so much about that which was of such little worth to him A depraved heart made him profane, indifferent, ungrateful, and rash.

II. A TIME IS SURE TO COME WHEN THE GOOD WE UNDERVALUED BECOMES OF GREATEST WORTH, AND WHEN IT MAY BE BEYOND OUR REACH. It was probably about twenty years after Esau had parted with his birthright that Isaac felt one day that his end was approaching, and desired to bless his son before he died. He was ignorant of the transfer which had been made. Esau deceived his father. He ignored a solemn compact. He would now rob his brother. He comes back perspiring and exhausted from the field, thinking that anyhow he has earned his father's blessing. He finds that Jacob has acted in his right and obtained the blessing. His own mother frustrates him, believing that she was acting rightly for her son Jacob. We can see how questionable were her doings, but we must not measure her nor Jacob by present moral standards. Esau weeps, "What, no blessing for thy firstborn?" He gets a blessing, but not the best. Deep his regret. He sees now his folly in its true light. "No place for repentance," &c. means no chance of repairing the mischief. Thus things done thoughtlessly in youth may have fearful after-consequences. Neglect of educational advantages, incurring of debt, acquirement of habits, rejection of appeals, and withstanding religious impressions. As the icicle freezes one drop at a time, so character is gradually formed. It depends on the water as to what the icicle will be. If muddy and tinged, the frozen mass will not be transparent; clear or thick, it is frozen and fixed, and will never be altered until dissolved altogether. Where are the warm rays that are to change our character? Esau sought to change his father's mind, but it was useless. Our heavenly Father is always willing to forgive if there be true repentance, but his forgiveness may not conquer the fixed evil habit. So long as there is life none should despair. See how David sinned, but he repented too. Esau lacked contrition. His sorrow was only remorse. What if we are risking the loss of some great spiritual advantage like to Esau's! We shall discover it on the death-bed or at the judgment bar. There is then a serious warning—1. To those who are trifling with religion. Can you push the cross aside, and laugh on Calvary's mount? 2. To those hardening their hearts in neglect. An old man once said to me, "It is no use talking of religion to me now; I am past it. There was a time once when I felt, but now I cannot." 3. To those who think it will be easier to repent and do the right later in life. God promises pardon when we repent, but he does not promise to prolong life. Probably there is not one present who has not heard this warning before, therefore it is to be feared it will be as unavailing as the preceding. Oh, Holy Spirit, forbid that it should.—H.

Ver. 34.—*Neglect of heavenly things.* "Thus Esau despised his birthright." Strange and sad that truths so important as those bearing on eternal life, even where believed, often exercise so slight influence. Yet so it is. How many like to hear the gospel in its fulness, and to be warned against neglecting it, yet in their lives show little of its power (Ezek. xxxiii. 32). How many live, content to know truth, forgetting that all our daily life tells for good or ill on our eternal life, and that opportunities are passing away. How many, believing that in every being there is a soul to be saved or lost, can yet see multitudes living in ungodliness without effort or even prayer for their recovery (cf. Luke xix. 41). Is not the spirit of Esau in these? He is called (Heb. xii. 16) a "profane person." Yet no crime or great fault is laid to his charge. There is an attractiveness in his character. We see in him an impulsive, thoughtless man; not what would be called a bad son; his father's favourite; having some regard to his parent's wishes (ch. xxviii. 8, 9); but swayed by passing things, and without self-denial. Hungry and weary with the chase, he craved the food he saw (cf. Matt. iv. 3). But the price? His birthright, the claim to a special benediction, the domestic priesthood (cf. Exod. xxii. 29), were as nothing. He did not realise their value (cf. Heb. xi. 1). The present was everything (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 32). The pleasant, genial, headlong man is pronounced "profane." Observe—

I. THE GRADUAL EFFECT OF SELF-INDULGENCE (cf. Matt. xix. 24). The birthright despised not through sudden temptation or any marked step of sin, but by worldly

interests taking up the thoughts. Customs and maxims of the world tend to neglecting the birthright (cf. Matt. vi. 33). This is no ideal danger. No sharp line to tell when danger begins. Things perfectly allowable, even laudable, may choke spiritual life. Even in good work the mind may be so engrossed in the work itself that communion with God fades. There is need of habitual self-denial (John vi. 38); of keeping guard over the tendencies of daily life; of definite aims, not passing wishes; of making personal communion with God an essential part of each day's work.

II. THE DEADENING EFFECT IN RELATION TO REPENTANCE. "Time enough" is a fatal mistake (Acts xxiv. 25; 2 Cor. vi. 2). So far as we know Esau never repented. Even when Jacob received the blessing he was sorry, but there was no real change, no confession of error. Self was still the ruling power.

III. THE CALL TO CONSIDER OUR BIRTHRIGHT (Rom. viii. 17; 1 John iii. 2). Not merely a future blessing. Thinking of it thus leads to its being left out of view. Now there is reconciliation, peace, spirit of adoption, the Spirit's witness in our hearts, freedom of access in prayer, and promises to be realised in growing likeness to Christ and communion with him. Few would deliberately postpone to the end of life the claiming their birthright and making sure of it, the work of repentance and faith, and the casting away what has hindered. But many without set purpose do delay. Each time the call is put away is a victory for the tempter.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Ver. 1.—**And there was a famine in the land** (of Canaan), **beside the first** (*i. e.* first recorded) **famine that was in the days of Abraham**—at least a century previous (*vide* ch. xii. 10). **And Isaac**—who, since his father's death, had been residing at Hagar's well in the wilderness of Beersheba (ch. xxv. 11)—**went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar** (cf. ch. xx. 1, 2; xxi. 22). Seventy or eighty years having elapsed since Abraham's sojourn in Gerar, it is scarcely probable that this was the monarch who then reigned.

Ver. 2.—**And the Lord** (Jehovah, *i. e.* the God of the covenant and of the promise) **appeared unto him,**—only two Divine manifestations are mentioned as having been granted to the patriarch. Either the peaceful tenor of Isaac's life rendered more theophanies in his case unnecessary; or, if others were enjoyed by him, the brief space allotted by the historian to the record of his life may account for their omission from the narrative. Though commonly understood as having occurred in Gerar (Keil, Lange, Murphy), this appearance is perhaps better regarded as having taken place at Lahai-roi, and as having been the cause of Isaac's turning aside into the land of the Philistines (Calvin) —**and said, Go not down into Egypt**—whither manifestly he had been purposing to migrate, as his father had done on the occasion of the earlier dearth (ch. xii. 10). Jacob in the later famine was instructed to go down to Egypt (ch. xlvi. 3, 4); Abraham in the first scarcity was left at liberty to think and act for himself. **Dwell in the land which I will tell thee of** (*i. e.* Philistia, as appears from the preceding verse).

Ver. 3.—**Sojourn in this land,**—viz., Philistia (Murphy, Alford), though otherwise regarded as Canaan (Lange, Keil, Calvin)—**and I will be with thee, and will bless thee.** Of this comprehensive promise, the first part was enjoyed by, while the second was distinctly stated to, Abraham (cf. ch. xii. 2). God's presence with Isaac of higher significance than his presence with Ishmael (ch. xxi. 20). **For unto thee, and unto thy seed, will I give all these**—הָאֵל, an archaism for הָאֵלֶּה (cf. ch. xix. 8, 25)—**countries** (*i. e.* Canaan and the surrounding lands), **and I will perform the oath** (*vide* ch. xxii. 16) **which I sware unto Abraham thy father.**

Ver. 4.—**And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven** (*vide* ch. xv. 1—6), **and will give unto thy seed all these countries** (*i. e.* the territories occupied by the Canaanitish tribes); **and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed** (cf. ch. xii. 3; xxii. 18).

Ver. 5.—**Because that Abraham obeyed** (literally, *hearkened to*) **my voice** (a general description of the patriarch's obedience, which the next clause further particularises), **and kept my charge,**—*custodierit custodiam* (Calvin); observed my observances (Kalisch); the charge being that which is intended to be kept—**my commandments,**—*i. e.* particular injunctions, specific enactments, express or occasional orders (cf. 2 Chron. xxxv. 16)—**my statutes,**—or permanent ordinances, such as the passover; literally, *that which is*

graven on tables or monuments (compare Exod. xii. 14)—**and my laws**—which refer to the great doctrines of moral obligation. The three terms express the contents of the Divine observances which Abraham observed.

Ver. 6.—**And Isaac dwelt in Gerar**—as God had shown and enjoined him.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—6.—*A good man's perplexity.* I. THE CONTEMPLATED JOURNEY. 1. *Its projected destination.* Egypt. Renowned for fertility, the land of the Pharaohs was yet no proper resort for the son of Abraham, the heir of Canaan, and the friend of God. It was outside the land of promise; it had been to Abraham a scene of peril, and it was not a place to which he was directed to turn. Considerations such as these should have operated to deter Isaac from even entertaining the idea of a pilgrimage to Egypt. But the behaviour of this Hebrew patriarch is sometimes outdone by that of modern saints, who not simply project, but actually perform, journeys, of pleasure or of business, across the boundary line which separates the Church from the world, into places where their spiritual interests are endangered, and that too not only without the Divine sanction, but sometimes in express violation of that authority. 2. *Its ostensible occasion.* The famine. A severe trial, especially to a flock-master. It was yet by no means an exceptional trial, but one which had occurred before in the experience of the inhabitants of Canaan, and in particular of his father, and might possibly recur to himself, just as life's afflictions generally bear a singular resemblance to one another (1 Cor. x. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 12). It was not an accidental trial, but had been appointed and permitted by that Divine wisdom without whose sanction no calamity can fall on either nation or individual, saint or sinner (Deut. xxxii. 39; Ps. lxvi. 11; Amos iii. 6). And just as little was it purposeless, being designed to initiate Isaac in that life discipline from which no child of God can escape (Acts xiv. 22; Heb. xii. 11; James i. 2, 3). 3. *Its secret inspiration.* Unbelief. Jehovah, who had given the land to Isaac, could easily have maintained him in it notwithstanding the dearth, had it been his pleasure not to provide a way of escape. Had Isaac not at this time been walking somewhat by sight, it is probable his thoughts would not have turned to Egypt. Most of the saint's doubtful transactions and dangerous projects have a secret connection with the spirit of unbelief which causes to err.

II. THE DIVINE INTERPOSITION. 1. *Prohibiting.* "Go not down into Egypt." That Jacob subsequently went down to Egypt in obedience to Divine instructions is no proof that Isaac would have been blameless had he gone down without them. Abraham did so, but it is not certain that God approved of his conduct in that matter. Besides, though it could be shown that Abraham incurred no guilt and contracted no hurt by residence in Egypt, it would not follow that his son might venture thither with impunity and without sin. Hence the proposed journey was interdicted. So God in his word debars saints from going down to the unspiritual and unbelieving world to endamage or imperil their souls' higher interests. 2. *Prescribing.* "Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: sojourn in this land." It is always safest for the saint in seasons of perplexity to wait for and to follow the light from heaven. Sufficient guidance God has promised, through his Spirit, by his word, and in his providence, to enable gracious ones who wait upon his teaching to detect the path of duty and the place of safety. 3. *Promising.* For Isaac's encouragement the various promises of the Abrahamic covenant are repeated, renewed, and confirmed to himself for his father's sake; embracing promises of the Divine presence—"I will be with thee"—and the Divine blessing—"and will bless thee;" in which latter are comprehended the inheritance,—"all these countries,"—the seed,—"I will make thy seed to multiply,"—and the universal salvation—"in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," which had been promised and guaranteed to Abraham by oath. So has God given to believers "exceeding great and precious promises" for Christ's sake, because of the covenant made with him, on the ground of the obedience rendered, and for the merit of the sacrifice presented, by him.

III. THE FILIAL OBEDIENCE. "Isaac dwelt in Gerar," having removed thither in compliance with the Divine instructions. Like Abraham's, Isaac's obedience was—

1. *Minute*, exactly following the Divine prescription. 2. *Prompt*, putting into immediate execution the Divine commandment. 3. *Patient*, remaining in the land of the Philistines till God in his providence indicated it was time to remove. So should Christ's followers obey.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxvi.—*Line upon line, in God's teaching.* Isaac, like his father, has his time of sojourn among the Philistines. The events of his intercourse with the Abimelech of his day resemble those of the former patriarch, though there are differences which show that the recurrence is *historical*.

I. God repeats his lessons that they may make the deeper impression. The intention of the record is to preserve a certain *line of Divine guidance*. Isaac trod in the footsteps of Abraham. We have Isaac's *wells, oaths, feast, Shebah*—all following close upon those of the preceding generation.

II. The same preservation of the covenant race in the midst of heathens confirms that covenant. The same lesson of *special providential protection and blessing* is thus repeated and enforced. Again the same *contrast of man's infirmity with God's unchangeableness*. The perversity of the fleshly-minded man forming a marriage connection with heathen people, and bringing grief of mind to his parents, reveals the distinctness of *the world* from *the kingdom of God*.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 7.—**And the men of the place** (*i. e.* the inhabitants of Gerar) **asked** him (literally, *asked*, or made inquiries; probably first at each other, though ultimately the interrogations might reach Isaac himself) **of his wife** (being in all likelihood fascinated by her beauty); **and he said,**—falling into the same infirmity as Abraham (ch. xii. 13; xx. 2)—**She is my sister**:—which was certainly an equivocation, since, although sometimes used to designate a female relative generally (*vide* ch. xxiv. 60), the term "sister" was here designed to suggest that Rebekah was his own sister, born of the same parents. In propagating this deception Isaac appears to have been actuated by a similar motive to that which impelled his father—**for he feared to say,** She is **my wife; lest,** said he (*sc.* to himself, the words describing the good man's secret apprehensions), **the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah**;—the historian adding, as the explanation of his fears—**because she** was **fair to look upon** (*vide* ch. xxiv. 16).

Ver. 8.—**And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time** (literally, *when were prolonged to him there the days*), **that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac** was **sporting with Rebekah his wife**—*i. e.* caressing and using playful liberties with her, which showed she was not a sister, but a wife—παίζοντα (LXX.), *jocantem* (Vulgate).

Ver. 9.—**And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said** (*sc.* in my heart, or to myself), **Lest I die for her.**

Ver. 10.—**And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife,**—literally, *within a little* (cf. Ps. lxxiii. 2; cxix. 87) *one of the people might have lain with thy wife*—**and thou shouldest**—*i. e.* (within a little) *thou mightest*—**have brought** (or caused to come) **guiltiness upon us** (cf. ch. xx. 9, where חֲטָאָה is used instead of אָשָׁם).

Ver. 11.—**And Abimelech charged all his** (literally, *the*) **people, saying, He that toucheth**—in the sense of injureth (cf. Josh. ix. 19; Ps. cv. 15)—**this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.** The similarity of this incident to that related in ch. xx. concerning Abraham in Gerar may be explained without resorting to the hypothesis of different authors. The stereotyped character of the manners of antiquity, especially in the East, is sufficient to account for the danger to which Sarah was exposed recurring in the case of Rebekah three quarters of a century later. That Isaac should have resorted to the miserable expedient of his father may have been due simply to a lack of originality on the part of Isaac; or perhaps the recollection of the success which had attended his father's adoption of this wretched subterfuge may have blinded him to its true character. But from whatever cause resulting, the resemblance between the two narratives cannot be held as destroying the credibility of either, and all the more that a careful scrutiny will detect sufficient dissimilarity between them to establish the authenticity of the incidents which they relate.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 7—11.—*A good man's transgression.* I. A LIE TOLD. 1. An *unmitigated* lie. It was scarcely entitled to claim the apology of being what Abraham's falsehood was, an equivocation, Rebekah not being Isaac's half-sister, but cousin. 2. A *deliberate* lie. Asked about his relations to Rebekah, he coolly replies that they are sister and brother. He had no right to suppose his interrogators had ulterior designs against Rebekah's honour. 3. A *cowardly* lie. All falsehoods spring from craven fear—fear of the consequences that may flow from telling the honest truth. 4. A *dangerous* lie. By his wicked suppression of the truth he was guilty of imperilling the chastity of her whom he sought to protect. Almost all falsehoods are perilous, and most of them are mistakes. 5. An *unnecessary* lie. No lie ever can be necessary; but least of all could this have been, when God had already promised to be with him in the land of the Philistines. 6. An *unbelieving* lie. Had Isaac's faith been active, he would hardly have deemed it needful to disown his wife. 7. A wholly *worthless* lie. Isaac might have remembered that twice over his father had resorted to this miserable stratagem, and that in neither instance had it sufficed to avert the danger which he dreaded. But lies generally are wretched hiding-places for endangered bodies or anxious souls.

II. A LIE DETECTED. 1. God by his providence assists in the detection of liars. By the merest accident, as it might seem, Abimelech discovered the true relationship of Isaac and Rebekah; but both the time, place, and manner of that discovery were arranged by God. So the face of God is set against them that do evil, even though they should be his own people. 2. Liars commonly assist in their own detection. Truth alone is sure-footed, and never slips; error is liable to stumble at every step. It is difficult to maintain a disguise for any lengthened period. The best fitting mask is sure in time to fall off. Actions good in themselves often lead to the detection of crimes.

III. A LIE REPROVED. The conduct of Isaac Abimelech rebukes—1. With *promptitude*. Sending for Isaac, he charges him with his sin. It is the part of a true friend to expose deception whenever it is practised, and, provided it be done in a proper spirit, the sooner it is done the better. Sin that long eludes detection is apt to harden the sinning heart and sear the guilty conscience. 2. With *fidelity*. Characterising it as (1) a surprising inconsistency on the part of a good man like Isaac; (2) a reckless exposure of his wife's person, which was far from becoming in a kindly husband; and (3) an unjustifiable offence against the people of the land, who, by his carelessness and cowardice, might have been led into grievous wickedness. 3. With *forgiveness*. That Abimelech did not intend to exact punishment from Isaac, or even cherish resentment against him in consequence of his behaviour, he proved by charging his people to beware of injuring in any way either Isaac or Rebekah. It is good and beautiful when mercy seasons judgment, and the reproofs of friendship are accompanied by messages of love.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 12.—**Then Isaac sowed in that land,**—viz., Philistia. Though a distinct advance on the purely nomadic life pursued by Abraham, this did not imply fixed property in, or even permanent settlement on, the soil, "but only annual tenancy" thereof. Robinson (i. 77) mentions a colony of the Tawarah Arabs, about fifty families, living near Abu Zabel, in Egypt, who cultivated the soil and yet dwelt in tents. "The Biblical patriarchs were not mere Bedawin wanderers, like those who now occupy the Eastern deserts. They had large herds of cattle, which genuine Bedawins have not; they tilled the ground, which these robbers never do; and they accommodated themselves, without difficulty or reluctance, to town and city when necessary, which wild Arabs cannot endure" ('Land and Book,' p. 296)—**and received in the same year an hundredfold**—literally, *an hundred measures*, i. e. for each measure of that which he sowed; an exceptional return even for Philistia, though "the country is no less fertile than the very best of the Mississippi Valley" ('Land and Book,' p. 557); and Arab grain stores at *Nüttâr-abu-Sümâr*, in the vicinity of Gaza, still proclaim the remunerative yield

of its harvests (Robinson, vol. i. p. 292). Herodotus (i. 193) speaks of two and three hundred-fold as having been reaped on the plain of Babylonia; but in Palestine the usual rate of increase was from thirty to a hundred-fold (*vide* Matt. xiii. 23). The reading "an hundred of barley" (LXX., Syriac, Michaelis) is not to be preferred to that in the Textus Receptus. **And the Lord blessed him**—as he had promised (ver. 3).

Ver. 13.—**And the man waxed great,**—like his father before him (cf. ch. xxiv. 1, 35)—**and went forward,**—literally, *went going*, the verb followed by the infinitive expressing constant growth or progressive increase (cf. ch. viii. 3; xii. 9; Judges iv. 24)—**and grew until he became very great**—"as any other farmer would who reaped such harvests" ('Land and Book').

Ver. 14.—**For he had** (literally, *there was to him*) **possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants**:—γεώργια πολλά (LXX.), *i.e.* much husbandry, the abstract being put for the concrete, "implying all manner of work and service belonging to a family, and so servants and tillage of all sorts" (Ainsworth); but the reference rather seems to be to the number of his household, or domestic slaves, *plurimum familiæ* (Vulgate)—**and the Philistines envied him.** The patriarch's possessions (*mikneh*, from *kanah*, to acquire) excited jealous feeling (from root *kana*, to burn) in the breasts of his neighbours (cf. Eccles. iv. 4).

Ver. 15.—**For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father** (*vide* ch. xxi. 30), **the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.** This act, commonly regarded as legitimate in ancient warfare, was practically to Isaac an act of expulsion, it being impossible for flocks and herds to exist without access to water supplies. It was probably, as the text indicates, the outcome of envy, rather than inspired by fear that Isaac in digging and possessing wells was tacitly claiming the ownership of the land.

Ver. 16.—**And Abimelech said unto Isaac** (almost leading to the suspicion that the Philistine monarch had instigated the outbreak of hostilities amongst his people), **Go from us** (a royal command rather than a friendly advice); **for thou art much mightier than we.** The same apprehension of the growing numbers and strength of Isaac's descendants in Egypt took possession of the heart of Pharaoh, and led to their enslavement (*vide* Exod. i. 9).

Ver. 17.—**And Isaac**—perhaps not without remonstrance, but without offering resistance, as became a saint (Matt. v. 5; Rom. xii. 17, 18; Heb. xii. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 9)—**departed thence** (*i. e.* from Gerar), **and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar,**—a valley or *nahal* meant a low, flat region watered by a mountain stream. The Wady Gerar has been identified with the *Joorf-el-Gerar*, the rush or rapid of Gerar, three hours south-east of Gaza—**and dwelt there.**

Ver. 18.—**And Isaac digged again**—literally, *returned and digged*, i. e. re-dug (cf. 2 Kings xx. 5)—**the wells of water, which they** (the servants of Abraham) **had digged in the days of Abraham his father;**—from which it appears that Abraham had digged other wells besides that of Beersheba (ch. xxi. 31)—**for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham**:—which was a violation of the league into which Abimelech had entered with the patriarch (*vide* ch. xxi. 23)—**and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them**—and with which Isaac was sufficiently acquainted.

Ver. 19.—**And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.** Literally, *living water* (cf. Levit. xiv. 5, 6; Zech. xiv. 8; Rev. xxi. 6).

Ver. 20.—**And the herdmen of Gerar**—*i. e.* Abimelech's servants (ch. xxi. 25)—**did strive with Isaac's herdmen,**—as Lot's with those of Abraham (ch. xiii. 7)—**saying, The water is ours**:—literally, *to us* (belong) *the waters*—**and he called the name of the well Esek** ("Strife"); **because they strove with him**—the verb being עָשַׂק, to strive about anything.

Ver. 21.—**And they digged another well** (Isaac having yielded up the first), **and strove for that also**:—"The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water" (Prov. xvii. 14)—**and he called the name of it Sitnah**—"Contention" (from שָׂטַן, to lie in wait as an adversary; whence Satan); probably in *Wady-es-Shutein*, near Rehoboth (*vide infra*).

Ver. 22.—**And he removed from thence** (yielding that too), **and digged another well; and for that they strove not** (perhaps as being beyond the boundaries of Gerar): **and he called the name of it Rehoboth**;—*i. e.* "Wide spaces" (hence "streets," ch. xix. 2); from רָחַב, to be or become broad; conjectured to have been situated in the *Wady Ruhaibeh*, about eight and a half hours to the south of Beersheba, where are still found a well named *Bir-Rohebeh* and ruins of a city of the same name (Robinson, vol. i. p. 289; Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 558)—**and he said, For now the Lord hath made room** (literally, *hath made a broad space*) **for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 12—22.—*A good man's prosperity.* I. WHENCE IT PROCEEDED. 1. *The industry of Isaac.* "Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold." An intimate connection subsists between diligence and prosperity. (1) As there is no harvest without a seed-time, so there is no increase of wealth without the putting forth of personal labour in its acquisition (cf. Prov. x. 4; xiii. 4; xxviii. 19). (2) As by God's appointment harvest follows seed-time, so commonly "the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (cf. Prov. xiii. 4; xxi. 5; xxviii. 19). 2. *The blessing of God.* "And the Lord blessed him." As without Divine assistance the best contrived and most laboriously applied means may fail in the accumulation of material goods, so with heavenly succour the least likely instruments can achieve success. The harvests of the farmer depend more upon the goodness of God than upon the excellence of the plough (cf. Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2).

II. IN WHAT IT RESULTED. 1. *The envy of the Philistines.* Envy, one of the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19; James iv. 5), a frequent characteristic of evil men (1 Cor. iii. 3; Titus iii. 3), an occasional infirmity of pious souls (1 Cor. iii. 3; Phil. i. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 1), and straitly forbidden by the law of God (Exod. xx. 17; Ps. xxxvii. 1; James v. 9), is commonly excited by observing the prosperity of others (Ps. xxxvii. 7; lxxiii. 7; Eccles. iv. 4; cf. Rachel and Leah, ch. xxx. 1, 15; Joseph's brethren, ch. xxxvii. 4—11, 19, 20; Acts vii. 9; Miriam and Aaron, Num. xii. 1—10; the princes of Darius, Dan. vi. 4), is usually accompanied with some degree of hatred (Cain, ch. iv. 4—8; Sarah, ch. xvi. 5, 6; Laban, ch. xxxi. 5), and inevitably tends, as in the case of the Philistines, to hostility, secret or open. 2. *The suspicion of Abimelech.* The growing power of the patriarch had filled the monarch's mind with alarm. Interpreting the character of Isaac by his own, he conceived it impossible to possess large resources without using them to acquire dominion over others. Modern kings and statesmen are scarcely further advanced, the prosperity of neighbouring empires being commonly regarded as a menace to the liberties of their own. It is the mission of Christianity, as regards both nations and individuals, to show how power of every kind can be possessed without injury, and wielded with advantage, to the highest interests of others.

III. HOW IT WAS MAINTAINED. By—1. *Patience,* or the exhibition of a meek and unresisting spirit in submitting to injury. When Abimelech requested him to leave the town of Gerar, he left. When the Philistines filled up his father's wells, he quietly dug them out again. When the herdmen of Gerar wrangled with his shepherds about a spring, he simply gave it up, and sought another; and when this too was disputed, he retired and sank a third. And all the while his flocks and herds kept on multiplying. A beautiful example of the spirit which Christ has enjoined (Matt. v. 39—42), and of the promise which Christ has made (Matt. v. 5) to his followers. 2. *Perseverance,* or the diligent exercise of means in selecting pasture grounds and digging wells; not permitting himself to be discouraged by the opposition of his neighbours, but, while peacefully allowing himself to be despoiled, steadily attending to his business. An illustration of that quiet, determined, and unwearied application which often contributes more to success in life than brilliant abilities. 3. *Piety,* or the grateful recognition of God's hand in putting an end to the irritation and annoyance of his neighbours, and giving him at last a comfortable settlement at Rehoboth. It is grace in God which affords quiet neighbourhoods to reside in, easy circumstances to live in, and hopeful futures to trust in; and it is piety in us to acknowledge that grace.

Learn—1. That there is only one royal road to material prosperity, viz., diligence and devotion. 2. That if material prosperity can procure comforts, it is also attended by drawbacks. 3. That material prosperity is often thrown away in litigation when it might be preserved by submission. 4. That material prosperity should stir the heart's gratitude to God.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 22.—*Digging wells of salvation.* "And he removed from thence, and digged another well." Historically, an instance of a meek and quiet spirit in contact with the world. Wells precious. Often formed with much labour. Herdsmen of Gerar took what Isaac had digged. Twice he yielded for the sake of peace. Then he digged another, and for it they strove not. His example (cf. Matt. v. 39; 1 Cor. vi. 7). But we may also observe a typical significance. Wells, fountains, sources of "living water" (Isa. xii. 3; Zech. xiii. 1) connected with spiritual blessings (cf. 1 Cor. x. 4 with John iv. 14, and vii. 39).

I. Isaac digged, to find "the gift of God" (common Eastern name for water). The gift is from God alone (Isa. xliv. 3; Zech. xii. 10). His will to bless appears through the whole Bible—in the first formation of man, and in care for the salvation of sinners (Luke xix. 10). But many, though thirsty, do not seek living water. They have not peace. Separation from God brings unrest (Isa. lvii. 20). But the cause is not believed, and the way of comfort not loved. Many try all ways to find peace except the right one. They will follow preachers, or take up systems, or join associations. But Christ's word is "Come unto me." Again, many will not dig; content merely to wish. God who bestows the gift has appointed means (Matt. xi. 12). These do not really desire a work of grace in their souls. Want to be made safe, not to be renewed; to be delivered from fear, but not disturbed just now. Hence do not search their Bibles (Ps. cxix. 130), or pray for the Holy Spirit (Ezek. xxxvii. 9), or care for the salvation of others (1 John iii. 17). It is God's will we should dig. He may send a blessing unsought. But usually he works through means. The Bible, prayer, the Lord's table, Christian converse, Christian work (Prov. xi. 25), all are as wells, means for getting the water of life; nothing in themselves, yet made effectual where the blessing is desired.

II. Hindrances. Let none expect to possess wells of salvation without. They form the trial of faith (1 Pet. i. 7). From those who love not God. A Christian member of a worldly family, or cast among careless associates, meets many hindrances. They may be open or veiled; in opposition or in mistaken kindness. And time for prayer is intruded on, and work for God is hindered, and a constant opposing influence is felt to chill the love of God. Or the hindrance may be from within. In prayer the mind overpowered by intrusive thoughts; besetting sins constantly gaining the victory; our spirits not in harmony with the "still small voice." Remember it is God's will through trial to give victory (1 Cor. x. 13). Amalek fought against Israel (Exod. xvii.) as the herdsmen strove against Isaac, but the way of victory was the same in both instances—trust and perseverance.

III. Digged another well (Gal. vi. 9). Will the Lord fail his people though surrounded by hindrances? Is some means of grace debarred? Is some line of Christian work, some way of Christian progress, closed against thee? Dig another well. Seek and pray for other channels in which to consecrate thy life. Perhaps the real foe hindering thee was self-will, and God has helped thee to put down self. Jesus cried, "Come unto me and drink." Whatever be the well, he is the source of its spring. Make it clear to your own heart that you are pressing to him. Tell God that it is indeed so. Then in some form or other the prayer, "Spring up, O well," shall have an abundant answer.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 23.—**And he** (viz., Isaac) **went up from thence** (Rehoboth, where latterly he had been encamped) **to Beer-sheba**—a former residence of Abraham (ch. xxi. 33), situated "near the water-shed between the Mediterranean and the Salt Sea" (Murphy), hence approached from the low-lying wady by an ascent.

Ver. 24.—**And the Lord appeared unto him the same night** (*i. e.* the night of his arrival at Beersheba), **and said** (in a dream or vision), **I** (the pronoun is emphatic) **am the God** (the Elohim) **of Abraham thy father** (the language is expressive not alone of the covenant relationship which subsisted between Jehovah and the patriarch while the

latter lived, but also of the present continuance of that relationship, since Abraham, though dead, had not ceased to be): **fear not** (cf. ch. xv. 1, in which the same encouraging admonition is addressed to Abraham after his battle with the kings), **for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed**—a repetition of promises already given to himself (*vide* vers. 3, 4)—**for my servant Abraham's sake**—a reason declaring God's gracious covenant, and not personal merit, to be the true source of blessing for Isaac.

Ver. 25.—**And he** (*i. e.* Isaac, in grateful response to the Divine Promiser who had appeared to him) **builded an altar there,**—the first instance of altar building ascribed to Isaac; "those erected by his father no doubt still remaining in the other places where he sojourned" (Inglis) — **and called upon the name of the Lord,**—*i. e.* publicly celebrated his worship in the midst of his household (*vide* on ch. xii. 7, 8)—**and pitched his tent there** (the place being now to him doubly hallowed by the appearance of the Lord to himself as well as to his father): **and there Isaac's servants digged a well**—a necessary appendage to a flockmaster's settlement.

Ver. 26.—**Then** (literally, *and*) **Abimelech went to him from Gerar,** — the object of this visit was to resuscitate the alliance which had formerly existed between the predecessor of Abimelech and Abraham (ch. xxi. 22—32); yet the dissimilarity between the two accounts is so great as to discredit the hypothesis that the present is only another version of the earlier transaction—**and Ahuzzath one of his friends,**—מֵרֵעֵהוּ; neither *ὁ νυμφαγωγὸς αὐτοῦ* (LXX.), nor a suite or number of his friends (Onkelos), nor one of his friends (A. V.); but his friend, and probably his privy councillor (Keil, Kalisch, Murphy), whose presence along with the monarch and his general marks the first point of difference between the present and the former incident—**and Phichol** (*vide* ch. xxi. 22) **the chief captain of his army.**

Ver. 27. — **And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore**—מַדּוּעַ, contr. from מָה יָדוּעַ, what is taught? = for what reason (cf. *τί μαθών*) —**come ye to me, seeing** (literally, *and*) **ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?** While animadverting to the personal hostility to which he had been subjected, Isaac says nothing about the wells of which he had been deprived: a second point of difference between this and the preceding narrative of Abraham's covenant with the Philistine king.

Ver. 28.—**And they said, We saw certainly**—literally, *seeing we saw*, i. e. we assuredly perceived, or, we have indeed discovered (*vide* Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 312). Abimelech and his ministers first explain the motive which has impelled them to solicit a renewal of the old alliance—**that the Lord was with thee**:—the use of Jehovah instead of Elohim, as in ch. xxi. 22, does not prove that this is a Jehovistic elaboration of the earlier legend. Neither is it necessary to suppose that the term Jehovah is a Mosaic translation of the epithet employed by Abimelech (Rosenmüller). The long-continued residence of Abraham in Gerar and Beersheba afforded ample opportunity for Abimelech becoming acquainted with the patriarch's God. The introduction of Jehovah into the narrative may be noted as a third point of dissimilarity between this and the previous account—**and we said, Let there be now an oath**—*i. e.* a treaty secured by an oath or self-imprecation on the transgressor (cf. ch. xxiv. 41; Deut. xxix. 11, 13)—**betwixt us,** even **betwixt us and thee,** —a farther particularisation of the parties to the covenant for the sake of emphasis—**and let us make a covenant with thee.** The phrase "to cut a covenant," here used in a so-called Jehovistic portion of the history, occurs in ch. xxi. 27, 32, which confessedly belongs to the fundamental document.

Ver. 29.—**That thou wilt do us no hurt,** —literally, *if thou wilt do us evil* (sc. thy curse come upon thee!); the force being to negative in the strongest way possible any intention of injury (cf. ch. xxi. 23)—**as we have not touched thee,**—*i. e.* injured thee; which was not true, as they, through their servants, had robbed Isaac of at least two wells — **and as we have done unto thee nothing but good,**—Abimelech's estimate of his own behaviour, if exceedingly favourable to himself, is at least natural (*vide* Prov. xvi. 2)—**and have sent thee away in peace** (without open violence certainly, because of Isaac's yielding, but scarcely without hostility): **thou art now the blessed of the Lord.** Regarded by some as an instance of adroit and pious flattery, these words are perhaps better understood as explaining either why Isaac should overlook the injuries which they had done to him (Calvin, Bush), or why he should grant them the oath which they desired (Ainsworth),—he requiring no guarantee of safety from them, since Jehovah was on his side (Murphy),—or why they had been stirred up to seek his favour and alliance (Rosenmüller).

Ver. 30.—**And he made them a feast,**—so Lot did to the angels (ch. xix. 3). There is no mention of any banquet in the case of Abraham's covenant, which may be noted as another point of difference between the two transactions. A similar entertainment accompanied Jacob's covenant with Laban (ch. xxxi. 54); while in the Mosaic system the sacrificial meal formed an integral part

of the regularly-appointed sacrificial worship (Levit. vii. 15, 31; Deut. xii. 7, 17; *vide* Kurtz, 'Sacrificial Worship,' § 79)—**and they did eat and drink.**

Ver. 31.—**And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another**:—literally, *a man to his brother*. On the derivation of the verb to swear from the word for seven, see ch. xxi. 23—**and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.**

Ver. 32.—**And it came to pass the same day** (*i. e.* the day of the treaty), **that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged,**—the operation of sinking this well had probably commenced on the day of Abimelech's arrival at Beersheba (*vide* ver. 25). Almost immediately on the king's departure the well-diggers returned to the patriarch's encampment to report the success of their operations—**and said unto him, We have found water.** The LXX., mistaking לוֹ, to him, for לֹא, not, read, "We have not found water;" the incorrectness of which is sufficiently declared by what follows.

Ver. 33.—**And he called it Shebah** ("Oath;" which he would certainly not have done had it not been a well): **therefore the name of the city** (which ultimately gathered round the well) **is Beersheba**—*i. e.* the well of the oath (*vide* ch. xxi. 31). Isaac must have perfectly understood that the place had been so named by his father three quarters of a century previous; but either the name had been forgotten by others, or had not come into general use amongst the inhabitants, or, observing the coincidence between his finding a well just at the time of covenanting with Abimelech and the fact that his father's treaty was also connected with a well, he wished to confirm and perpetuate the early name which had been assigned to the town. It is not certain that this was Abraham's well which had been rediscovered; the probability is that it was another, since at Bir-es-Sheba two wells are still in existence (*vide* ch. xxi. 31)—**unto this day**—an expression used throughout Genesis to describe events separated from the age of Moses by several centuries (*vide* ch. xix. 37, 38; xxii. 14; xxxii. 32).

Ver. 34.—**And Esau was forty years old**—literally, *a son of forty years;* the age of Isaac when he married Rebekah (ch. xxv. 20)—**when he took to wife Judith** (*Jehudith,* "Celebrated," "Praised," if Shemitic; but the name is probably Phœnician) **the daughter of Beeri**—("of a well"? "The Well-finder," *vide* ch. xxxvi. 24)—**the Hittite, and Bashemath** ("Sweet-smelling," "Fragrant"?) **the daughter of Elon the Hittite**)—adding to them afterwards Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, and sister of Nebajoth (ch. xxviii. 9). On Esau's wives *vide* ch. xxxvi. 2, 3.

Ver. 35.—**Which were a grief of mind** (literally, *bitterness of spirit*) **unto Isaac and to Rebekah**—possibly because of their personal characters, but chiefly because of their Canaanitish descent, and because in marrying them Esau had not only violated the Divine law which forbade polygamy, but also evinced an utterly irreligious and unspiritual disposition.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 23—35.—*A good man's environment.* I. ISAAC AND JEHOVAH. 1. *Jehovah's grace to Isaac.* (1) Revealing his presence. "The Lord appeared unto him." Similar discoveries are now made to saints in "night" seasons, and at localities like Beersheba, previously consecrated by gracious revelations of himself. (2) Proclaiming his character. "I am the God of thy father;" an appellation that must have sounded dear to Abraham's son, but not more than the God of our Lord Jesus Christ is to Christians. (3) Comforting his servant. "Fear not, for I am with thee." So a Christian has the best right to preserve equanimity amid life's vicissitudes and tribulations, Christ's command (Matt. x. 31; Luke xii. 32); and the best reason, Christ's presence (Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20). (4) Renewing his promises. "I will bless thee and multiply thy seed." God renews his promises when he revives their impressions on the heart, which he does for his own glory as the faithful Promiser, and for his people's comfort as necessity requires. 2. *Isaac's gratitude to Jehovah.* (1) Building an altar; an act expressive of Isaac's personal devotion (1 Thess. v. 18). (2) Invoking God's name; referring to the public recital of God's goodness (*vide* ch. xii. 8). It becomes saints to remember God's mercies (Ps. xlviii. 9; ciii. 1, 2), and to speak of them to others (Ps. lxvi. 16; lxxviii. 4). (3) Pitching a tent and digging a well; indicative of Isaac's confidence in God. Grateful acknowledgment of past mercies, public celebration of present mercies, hopeful expectation of future mercies, are duties incumbent upon all, but especially on saints.

II. Isaac and Abimelech. 1. *Abimelech's request of Isaac.* (1) The nature of it: a demand for a formal alliance confirmed by the sanctions of religion. "Let there be now an oath betwixt us, and let us make a covenant with thee." (2) The object of it: his own rather than Isaac's protection. "That thou wilt do us no hurt." Most men suspect their neighbours sooner than themselves. Christianity requires saints to be as careful of their neighbour's interests as of their own (Phil. ii. 4). (3) The motive of it: partly selfish fear, and partly a recognition of Isaac's goodness. "Thou art now the blessed of the Lord." 2. *Isaac's reception of Abimelech.* (1) Cautious inquiry. "Wherefore come ye to me?" It is prudent to try injurious men before we trust them. (2) Generous entertainment. "He made them a feast." Overlooking, as became a good man, their too favourable account of themselves, he gave them welcome to his hospitable board. God's people should not be censorious even in judging enemies; when obliged to suffer, they should forget as well as forgive injuries, and never should they disdain overtures for peace, though made by those who have done them wrong. 3. *Solemn adjuration.* "And they sware one to another." Though religion does not lie within the sphere of politics, politics lie within the sphere of religion. Nothing should be done by a good man that he cannot sanctify by the word of God and prayer (Col. iii. 17, 23). 4. *Peaceful dismissal.* "Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace." Those who come for peace should never go without peace. It is the saint's interest as well as duty to follow after peace (Matt. v. 9). No sooner had Isaac dismissed Abimelech and his ministers, than his servants came with tidings of their successful operations in sinking a well. Peace-makers seldom fail to find a recompense (James iii. 18).

III. Isaac and Esau. 1. *Esau's sinful marriage.* (1) He took more wives than one, which was against the fundamental law of marriage (ch. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5); (2) he married Canaanitish women, which was against the will of God, as expressed by Abraham in regard to Isaac's marriage, and doubtless also by Isaac with reference to Esau's; and (3) he acted contrary to his parents' counsel in the matter, which was a violation of that filial duty which he owed his aged parents. 2. *Isaac's bitter grief.* (1) Deeply seated as to its intensity, being bitterness of spirit (Prov. xviii. 14); (2) truly religious as to its character, being occasioned chiefly by the circumstance that Esau's ill-assorted marriages were not such as Heaven could approve; and (3) sympathisingly shared by Rebekah, whose motherly bosom was also stricken with sorrow at her son's impiety.

Learn—1. That God's gracious visits to his people are always admirably suited to their needs in respect of time, place, and manner. 2. That when a man's ways please God he maketh even his enemies be at peace with him. 3. That while a wise son maketh a glad father, a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old,**—according to the generally-accepted calculation, in his one hundred and thirty-seventh year. Joseph, having been introduced to Pharaoh in his thirtieth year (ch. xli. 46), and having been thirty-nine years of age (ch. xlv. 6) when his father, aged one hundred and thirty (ch. xlvii. 9), came down to Egypt, must have been born before Jacob was ninety-one; consequently, as his birth occurred in the fourteenth year of Jacob's sojourn in Mesopotamia (cf. ch. xxx. 25 with xxix. 18, 21, 27), Jacob's flight must have taken place when he was seventy-seven. But Jacob was born in Isaac's sixtieth year (ch. xxv. 26); hence Isaac was now one hundred and thirty-seven. There are, however, difficulties connected with this reckoning which lay it open to suspicion. For one thing, it postpones Jacob's marriage to an extremely late period. Then it takes for granted that the term of Jacob's service in Padan-aram was only twenty years (ch. xxxi. 41), whereas it is not certain whether it was not forty, made up, according to the computation of Kennicott, of fourteen years' service, twenty years' assistance as a neighbour, and six years of work for wages. And, lastly, it necessitates the birth of Jacob's eleven children in the short space of six years, a thing which appears to some, if not impossible, at least highly improbable. Adopting the larger number as the term of Jacob's sojourn in Mesopotamia, Isaac would at this time be only one hundred and seventeen (*vide* 'Chronology of Jacob's Life,'

xxxi. 41)—**and his eyes were dim,**—literally, *were failing in strength*, hence becoming dim (1 Sam. iii. 2). In describing Jacob's decaying vision a different verb is employed (ch. xlviii. 10)—**so that he could not see,** —literally, *from seeing;* מִן with the inf. constr. conveying the idea of receding from the state of perfect vision (cf. ch. xvi. 2; xxxi. 29; *vide* Gesenius, 'Hebrew Grammar,' § 132)—**he called Esau his eldest son,** —Esau was born before his twin brother Jacob (ch. xxv. 25)—**and said unto him, My son:**—*i. e.* my special son, my beloved son, the language indicating fondness and partiality (ch. xxv. 28)—**and he** (Esau) **said unto him, Behold,** here am I.

Ver. 2.—**And he** (*i. e.* Isaac) **said, Behold now, I am old, and know not the day of my death.** Isaac had manifestly become apprehensive of the near approach of dissolution. His failing sight, and probably the recollection that Ishmael, his half-brother, had died at 137 (if that was Isaac's age at this time; *vide supra*), occasioned the suspicion that his own end could not be remote, though he lived forty-three or sixty-three years longer, according to the calculation adopted, expiring at the ripe age of 180 (*vide* ch. xxx. 28).

Ver. 3.—**Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons,**—the word "weapon" signifying a utensil, vessel, or finished instrument of any sort (cf. ch. xxiv. 53; xxxi. 37; xlv. 20). Here it manifestly denotes weapons employed in hunting, and in particular those next specified—**thy quiver**—the ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, תְּלִי from תָּלָה to hang, properly is "that which is suspended;" hence a quiver, φαρέτραν (LXX.), *pharetram* (Vulgate), which commonly depends from the shoulders or girdle (Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*), though by some it is rendered "sword" (Onkelos, Syriac)—**and thy bow** (*vide* ch. xxi. 16), **and go out to the field,**—*i. e.* the open country inhabited by wild beasts, as opposed to cities, villages, or camps (cf. ch. xxv. 27)—**and take me some venison**—literally, *hunt for me hunting*, i. e. the produce of hunting, as in ch. xxv. 28.

Ver. 4.—**And make me savoury meat,**—"delicious food," from a root whose primary idea is to taste, or try the flavour, of a thing. Schultens observes that the corresponding Arabic term is specially applied to dishes made of flesh taken in hunting, and highly esteemed by nomade tribes (*vide* Gesenius, p. 467)—**such as I love** (cf. ch. xxv. 28, the ground of his partiality for Esau), **and bring it to me, that I may eat;**—"Though Isaac was blind and weak in his eyes, yet it seemeth his body was of a strong constitution, seeing he was able to eat of wild flesh, which is of harder digestion" (Willet)—**that**—the conjunction בַּעֲבוּר followed by a future commonly expresses a purpose (cf. Exod. ix. 14) —**my soul may bless thee**—notwithstanding the oracle (ch. xxv. 23) uttered so many (fifty-seven or seventy-seven) years ago, Isaac appears to have clung to the belief that Esau was the destined heir of the covenant blessing; *quædam fuit cæcitatis species, quæ illi magis obstitit quam externa oculorum caligo* (Calvin)—**before I die.**

Ver. 5.—**And Rebekah** (who, though younger than Isaac, must also have been old) **heard when Isaac spake**—literally, *in the speaking of Isaac;* בְּ with the inf. forming a periphrasis for the gerund, and being commonly rendered by *when* (ch. xxiv. 30; xxxiii. 18), the subordinated noun being changed in translation into the subject of the sentence (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 304)—**to Esau his son** (to which the "her son" of ver. 6 stands in contrast). **And Esau went to the field to hunt** for **venison,** —literally, *to hunt hunting* (*vide* on ver. 3) and **to bring it**—*i. e.* "the savoury meat" or "delicious food," as directed (ver. 4).

Vers. 6, 7.—**And Rebekah** (having already formed a plan for diverting the patriarchal blessing from Esau, whose habit of life and utterly unspiritual character may perhaps have recalled to her mind and confirmed the declaration of the oracle concerning Jacob's precedence) **spake unto Jacob her son,**—*i. e.* her favourite, in contrast to Esau, Isaac's son (ver. 5)—**saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison** (*vide* on ver. 3), **and make me savoury meat, that I may eat** (literally, *and I shall eat*), **and bless thee**—the lengthened form of the future in this and the preceding verb (cf. וְאֹכֵלָה in ver. 4) is expressive of Isaac's self-excitement and emphatic determination—**before the Lord.** The word Jehovah, by modern criticism regarded as a sign of divided authorship, is satisfactorily explained by remembering that Rebekah is speaking not of the blessing of God's general providence, but of the higher benediction of the covenant (Hengstenberg). The phrase, though not included in Isaac's address to Esau, need not be regarded as due to Rebekah's invention. She may have understood it to be implied in her husband's language, though it was not expressed (cf. ch. xxiv. 20). That it was designedly omitted by Isaac in consequence of the worldly character of Esau appears as little likely as that it was deliberately inserted by Rebekah to whet her favourite's ambition (Kalisch). As to meaning, the sense may be that this patriarchal benediction was to be bestowed sincerely (Menochius), in presence and by the authority of God (Ainsworth, Bush, Clericus); but the use of the term

Jehovah rather points to the idea that Rebekah regarded Isaac simply "as the instrument of the living and personal God, who directed the concerns of the chosen race" (Hengstenberg). **Before my death.** Since Rebekah makes no remark as to the groundlessness of Isaac's fear, it is not improbable that she too shared in her bed-ridden husband's expectations that already he was "in the presence of" his end.

Ver. 8.—**Now therefore, my son,**—Jacob at this time was not a lad, but a grown man of mature years (if Isaac was 137, he must have been 77), which shows that in the following transaction he was rather an accomplice than a tool—**obey my voice according to that which I command thee.** We can scarcely here think of a mother laying her imperative instructions on a docile and unquestioning child; but of a wily woman detailing her well-concocted scheme to a son whom she discerns to be possessed of a like crafty disposition with herself, and whom she seeks to gain over to her stratagem by reminding him of the close and endearing relationship in which they stand to one another.

Vers. 9, 10.—**Go now to the flock, and fetch me**—literally, *take for me*, i. e. for my purposes (cf. ch. xv. 9)—**from thence two good kids of the goats.** According to Jarchi kids were selected as being the nearest approach to the flesh of wild animals. Two were specified, it has been thought, either to extract from both the choicest morsels (Menochius), or to have the appearance of animals taken in hunting (Rosenmüller), or to make an ample provision as of venison (Lange), or to make a second experiment, if the first failed (Willet). **And I will make them**—probably concealing any difference in taste by means of condiments, though Isaac's palate would not be sensitive in consequence of age and debility—**savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth** (*vide* ver. 4): **and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat** (literally, *and he shall eat*), **and that he may bless thee**—בַּעֲבֻר אֲשֶׁר, in order that, from the idea of passing over to that which one desires to attain; less fully in ver. 4—**before his death.** Clearly Rebekah was anticipating Isaac's early dissolution, else why this indecent haste to forestall Esau? There is no reason to surmise that she believed any connection to subsist between the eating and the benediction, though she probably imagined that the supposed prompt obedience of Isaac's son would stimulate his feeble heart to speak (Rosenmüller).

Ver. 11.—**And Jacob** (who was not yet such an adept at trickery as he afterwards became, and who, if he had no scruples of conscience in either imposing on a senile parent or despoiling an open-hearted brother, was yet averse to being detected in his frauds, as deceivers usually are) **said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man** (*vide* ch. xxv. 25) **and I am a smooth man**—חָלָק, smooth (opposed to שָׂעִיר, hairy); the primary idea of which is to cut off the hair. Cf. *χαλκός, χάλιξ, κόλαξ, γλυκύς, γλοῖος, γλίσχρος*; *glacies, glaber, gladius, glisco;* **gluten, glatt, gleiten, glas**—all of which convey the notion of smoothness (*vide* Gesenius, p. 283).

Ver. 12.—**My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver;**—literally, *shall be in his eyes as a scoffer* (Keil, Lange), with the idea of mocking at his aged sire's infirmities—*ὡς καταφρονῶν* (LXX.); or *as a deceiver*, an impostor, one who causes to go astray (Vulgate, Rosenmüller, Ainsworth, Murphy); though perhaps both senses should be included, the verb תָּעַע, to scoff, meaning primarily to stammer, and hence to mislead by imperfect speech, and thus to cause to wander or lead astray, תָּעָה (*vide* Gesenius, p. 870, and Kalisch, p. 506)—**and I shall bring a curse**—קְלָלָה (from קָלַל, to be light, hence to be despised) signifies first an expression of contempt, and then a more solemn imprecation—**upon me, and not a blessing.**

Ver. 13.—**And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son** (cf. ch. xliii. 9; 1 Sam. xxv. 24; 2 Sam. xiv. 9; Matt. xxvii. 25). Tempted to regard Rebekah's words as the utterance of a bold and unscrupulous woman (Aben Ezra), we ought perhaps to view them as inspired by faith in the Divine promise, which had already indicated that of her two sons Jacob should have the precedence (Willet, Calvin, Lange), and that accordingly there was every reason to anticipate not a malediction, but a benediction. **Only obey my voice** (*i. e.* do as I direct you, follow my instructions), **and go fetch me** them—or, go and take for me (*sc.* the two kids I spoke of).

Ver. 14.—**And he went** (*sc.* to the flock), **and fetched,**—or, rather, took (*sc.* the two kids as directed) **and brought** them (after slaughter, of course) **to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.** All this implies that Rebekah reckoned on Esau's absence for a considerable time, perhaps throughout the entire day.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*The stolen blessing: a domestic drama.*—1. *Isaac and Rebekah, or plotting and counterplotting.* I. THE SCHEME OF ISAAC. 1. *Its sinful object.* The heavenly oracle having with no uncertain sound proclaimed Jacob the theocratic heir, the bestowment of the patriarchal benediction on Esau was clearly an unholy design. That Isaac, who on Mount Moriah had evinced such meek and ready acquiescence in Jehovah's will, should in old age, from partiality towards his firstborn, or forgetfulness of Jehovah's declaration, endeavour to thwart the Divine purpose according to election affords a melancholy illustration of the deceitfulness of sin even in renewed hearts, and of the deep-seated antagonism between the instincts of nature and the designs of grace. 2. *Its secret character.* The commission assigned to Esau does not appear to have been dictated by any supposed connection between the gratification of the palate, the reinvigoration of the body, or the refreshment of the spirit and the exercise of the prophetic gift, but rather by a desire to divert the attention of Rebekah from supposing that anything unusual was going on, and so to secure the necessary privacy for carrying out the scheme which he had formed. Had Isaac not been doubtful of the righteousness of what he had in contemplation, he would never have resorted to manœuvring and secrecy, but would have courted unveiled publicity. Crooked ways love the dark (John iii. 20, 21). 3. *Its urgent motive.* Isaac felt impelled to relieve his soul of the theocratic blessing by a sense of approaching dissolution. If it be the weakness of old men to imagine death nearer, it is the folly of young men to suppose it farther distant than it is. To young and old alike the failure of the senses should be a premonition of the end, and good men should set their houses in order ere they leave the world (ch. xxv. 6; 2 Kings xx. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 1). 4. *Its inherent weakness.* That Isaac reckoned on Rebekah's opposition to his scheme seems apparent; it is not so obvious that he calculated on God's being against him. Those who meditate unholy deeds should first arrange that God will not be able to discover their intentions.

II. THE STRATAGEM OF REBEKAH. 1. *The design was legitimate.* Instead of her behaviour being represented as an attempt to outwit her aged, blind, and bed-ridden husband (for which surely no great cleverness was required), and to stealthily secure the blessing for her favourite, regard for truth demands that it should rather be characterised as an endeavour to prevent its surreptitious appropriation for Esau 2. *The inspiration was religious.* Displaying a considerable amount of woman's wit in its conception and execution, and perhaps largely tainted by maternal jealousy, Rebekah's stratagem ought in fairness to be traced to her belief in the pre-natal oracle, which had pointed to Jacob as the theocratic heir. That her faith, however mixed with unspiritual alloy, was strong seems a just conclusion from her almost reckless boldness (ver. 13). 3. *The wickedness was inexcusable.* Good as were its end and motive, the stratagem of Rebekah was deplorably wicked. It was an act of cruel imposition on a husband who had loved her for well-nigh a century; it was a base deed of temptation and seduction, viewed in its relations to Jacob—the prompting of a son to sin against a father; it was a signal offence against God in many ways, but chiefly in the sinful impatience it displayed, and in the foolish supposition that his sovereign designs needed the assistance of, or could be helped by, human craft in the shape of female cunning.

III. THE RIVAL ACC MPLICES. 1. *The confederate of Isaac.* The guilt of Esau consisted in seeking to obtain the birthright when he knew (1) that it belonged to Jacob by Heaven's gift, (2) that he had parted with any imaginary title he ever had to expect it, (3) that he was utterly unqualified to possess it, and (4) that he was endeavouring to obtain it by improper means. 2. *The tool of Rebekah.* That Jacob in acting on his mother's counsel was not sinless is evinced by the fact that he (1) perceived its hazardous nature (vers. 11, 12), (2) discerned its criminality, and yet (3) allowed himself to carry it through.

Lessons:—1. The wickedness of trying to subvert the will of Heaven—exemplified in Isaac. 2. The sinfulness of doing evil that good may come—illustrated by the

conduct of Rebekah. 3. The criminality of following evil counsel, in opposition to the light of conscience and the restraints of Providence—shown by the conduct of both Esau and Jacob.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 15.—**And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau,**—literally, *the robes of Esau her son the elder—the desirable*, i. e. the handsome ones. The בֶּגֶד was an outer garment worn by the Oriental (ch. xxxix. 12, 13, 15; xli. 42),—στολή, LXX.,—and was often made of beautiful and costly materials (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 10). That the clothes mentioned as belonging to Esau were sacerdotal robes possessed by him as heir of the patriarchal priesthood (Jewish Rabbis), though regarded by many as a probable conjecture (Ainsworth, Bush, Candlish, Clarke, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis), is devoid of proof, and may be pronounced unlikely, since the firstborn did not serve in the priesthood while his father lived (Willet, Alford). They were probably festive garments of the princely hunter (Kalisch)—**which were with her in the house,**—not because Esau saw that his wives were displeasing to his parents (Mercerus, Willet), or because they were sacred garments (Ainsworth, Poole), but probably because Esau, though married, had not yet quitted the patriarchal household (Kalisch)—**and put them upon Jacob her younger son.** The verb, being in the hiphil, conveys the sense of causing Jacob to clothe himself, which entirely removes the impression that Jacob was a purely involuntary agent in this deceitful and deeply dishonourable affair.

Ver. 16.—**And she put the skins of the kids of the goats**—not European, but Oriental camel-goats, whose wool is black, silky, of a much finer texture than that of the former, and sometimes used as a substitute for human hair (cf. Cant. iv. 1); *vide* on this subject Rosenmüller's 'Scholia,' and commentaries generally—**upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck**—thus cautiously providing against detection, in case, anything occurring to arouse the old man's suspicions, he should seek, as in reality he did, to test the accuracy of his now dim sight and dull hearing by the sense of touch.

Ver. 17.—**And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob**—who forthwith proceeded on his unholy errand.

Ver. 18.—**And he came unto his father,**—by this time a bed-ridden invalid (*vide* ver. 19)—**and said, My father.** If he attempted to imitate the voice of Esau, he was manifestly unsuccessful; the dull ear of the aged patient was yet acute enough to detect a strangeness in the speaker's tone. **And he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?** "He thought he recognised the voice of Jacob; his suspicions were aroused; he knew the crafty disposition of his younger son too well; and he felt the duty of extreme carefulness" (Kalisch).

Ver. 19.—**And Jacob** (either not observing or not regarding the trepidation which his voice caused, but being well schooled by his crafty mother, and determined to go through with what perhaps he esteemed a perfectly justifiable transaction) **said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn.** A reply for which laborious excuses have been invented; as that Jacob spoke mystically, meaning not that he individually, but that his descendants, the Church, were Isaac's firstborn (Augustine); or figuratively, as importing that since he had already bought Esau's birthright, he might justly regard himself as standing in Esau's place (Theodoret, Aquinas). It is better not to attempt vindication of conduct which to ordinary minds must ever appear questionable, but rather to hold that "Jacob told an officious lie to his father" (Willet). **I have done according as thou badest me.** If the former assertion might be cleared of mendacity, it is difficult to see how this can. By no conceivable sophistry could he convince his conscience that he was acting in obedience to his father, while he was knowingly implementing the instructions of his mother. This was Jacob's second lie. **Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison.** Lie three. One lie commonly requires another to support or conceal it. Few who enter on a course of deception stop at one falsehood. **That thy soul may bless me.** It was the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant he craved.

Vers. 20, 21.—**And Isaac** (still dissatisfied, but still resolving to proceed with caution) **said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?** Giving expression to a natural surprise at the speedy success which had attended Esau's hunting expedition; an interrogation to which Jacob replied with daring boldness (Murphy), with consummate effrontery (Bush), not without perjury (Calvin), and even with reckless blasphemy (Kalisch, Alford). **And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.** Literally, *caused it to come before me;* by the concurrence, of course, of his providence; which, though in one sense true, yet as used by Jacob was an impious falsehood. Solemn as this declaration was, it failed to lull the

suspicions or allay the disquiet of the aged invalid. **And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son,**—the very thing which Jacob had suggested as likely to happen (ver. 12)—**whether thou be my very son Esau** (literally, *this, my son Esau*) **or not.**

Vers. 22, 23.—**And Jacob** (with a boldness worthy of a better cause) **went near unto Isaac his father; and he** (*i.e.* Isaac) **felt him** (*i. e.* Jacob), **and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but** (literally, *and*) **the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.** Isaac must either have forgotten the heavenly oracle which announced the destinies of his sons at their birth, and distinctly accorded the precedence to Jacob, or he must not have attached the same importance to it as Rebekah, or he may have thought that it did not affect the transmission of the covenant blessing, or that it did not concern his sons so much as their descendants. It is hard to credit that Isaac either did not believe in the Divine announcement which had indicated Jacob as the heir of the promise, or that, believing it, he deliberately allowed paternal partiality to interfere with, and even endeavour to reverse, the will of Heaven.

Vers. 24—26.—**And he said** (showing that a feeling of uneasy suspicion yet lingered in his mind), **Art thou my very son Esau?** Luther wonders how Jacob was able to brazen it out; adding, "I should probably have run away in terror, and let the dish fall;" but, instead of that, he added one more lie to those which had preceded, saying with undisturbed composure, **I am**—equivalent to an English *yes;* upon which the blind old patriarch requested that the proffered dainties might be set before him. Having partaken of the carefully-disguised kid's flesh, and drunk an exhilarating cup of wine, he further desired that his favourite son should approach his bed, saying, **Come near now, and kiss me, my son**—a request dictated more by paternal affection (Keil, Kalisch) than by lingering doubt which required reassurance (Lange).

Ver. 27.—**And he came near, and kissed him.** Originally the act of kissing had a symbolical character. Here it is a sign of affection between a parent and a child; in ch. xxix. 13 between relatives. It was also a token of friendship (Tobit vii. 6; x. 12; 2 Sam. xx. 9; Matt. xxvi. 48; Luke vii. 45; xv. 20; Acts xx. 37). The kissing of princes was a symbol of homage (1 Sam. x. 1; Ps. ii. 12; Xenoph., 'Cyrop.,' vii. 5, 32). With the Persians it was a mark of honour (Xenoph., 'Agesil.,' v. 4). The Rabbins permitted only three kinds of kisses—the kiss of reverence, of reception, and of dismissal. The kiss of charity was practised among disciples in the early Christian Church (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14; *vide* Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Kissing). **And he smelled the smell of his raiment,**—not deliberately, in order to detect whether they belonged to a shepherd or a huntsman (Tuch), but accidentally while in the act of kissing. The odour of Esau's garments, impregnated with the fragrance of the aromatic herbs of Palestine, excited the dull sensibilities of the aged prophet, suggesting to his mind pictures of freshness and fertility, and inspiring him to pour forth his promised benediction—**and blessed him** (not a second time, the statement in ver. 23 being only inserted by anticipation), **and said,**—the blessing, as is usual in elevated prophetic utterances, assumes a poetic and antistrophical form (cf. Esau's blessing, vers. 39, 40)—**See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field**—the first clause of the poetic stanza clearly connects with the odour of Esau's raiment as that which had opened the fount of prophetic song in Isaac's breast, so far at least as its peculiar form was concerned; its secret inspiration we know was the Holy Ghost operating through Isaac's faith in the promise (*vide* Heb. xi. 20)—**which the Lord hath blessed.** The introduction of the name Jehovah instead of Elohim in this second clause proves that Isaac did not mean to liken his son to an ordinary well-cultivated field, but to "a field like that of Paradise, resplendent with traces of the Deity—an ideal field, bearing the same relation to an ordinary one as Israel did to the heathen—a kind of enchanted garden, such as would be realised at a later period in Canaan, as far as the fidelity of the people permitted it" (Hengstenberg).

Ver. 28.—**Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven,**—literally, *and the Elohim will give thee,* with an optative sense; *i. e.* and may the Elohim give thee! The occurrence of הָאֱלֹהִים in what is usually assigned to the Jehovist (Tuch, Bleek, Davidson) is not to be explained as a special Jehovistic formula (Colenso), or as a remnant of the fundamental Elohistic writing (Kalisch), or as indicating that the personal God, and not Jehovah, the God of the covenant, was the source of the blessing (Keil, Gosman in Lange), or as intimating a remaining doubt as to whether Esau was the chosen one of Jehovah (Lange); but as identifying Jehovah with Elohim, the art. being the art. of reference, as in ch. xxii. 1 (Hengstenberg; cf. Quarry 'on Genesis,' p. 483). The blessing craved was substantially that of a fertile soil, in Oriental countries the copious dew deposited by the atmosphere supplying the place of rain. Hence dew is employed in

Scripture as a symbol of material prosperity (Deut. xxxiii. 13, 28; Zech. viii. 12), and the absence of dew and rain represented as a signal of Divine displeasure (2 Sam. i. 21; 1 Kings xvii. 1; Haggai i. 10, 11)—**and the fatness of the earth,**—literally, *of the fatnesses*, or choicest parts, *of the earth* (ch. xlv. 18)—**and plenty of corn and wine**—*i. e.* abundance of the produce of the soil (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 28).

Ver. 29.—**Let people serve thee** (literally, *and will serve thee, peoples;* at once a prayer and a prophecy; fulfilled in the political subjection of the Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, Philistines, and Edomites by David; the thought being repeated in the next clause), **and nations bow down to thee** (in expression of their homage): **be lord over thy brethren,** —literally, *be a lord* (from the idea of power; found only here and in ver. 37) *to thy brethren.* Pre-eminence among his kindred as well as dominion in the world is thus promised—**and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee** (a repetition of the preceding thought, with perhaps a hint of his desire to humble Jacob, the favourite of Rebekah): **cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee**—framed on the model of the Abrahamic benediction (ch. xii. 3); but not so full as that, either because Isaac felt that after all Esau was not to be the progenitor of the holy seed (Murphy), or because, not being actuated by proper feelings towards Jehovah and his promises, the patriarch could not rise to that height of spiritual benediction to which he afterwards attained—ch. xxviii. 3, 4 (Keil), or because the prerogative of pronouncing the Abrahamic blessing in all its fulness Jehovah may have reserved to himself, as in ch. xxviii. 14 ('Speaker's Commentary').

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 15—29.—*The stolen blessing: a domestic drama.*—2. *Isaac and Jacob, or the successful stratagem.* I. Jacob's deception of Isaac. Jacob's personation of Esau was—1. *Deftly prepared.* The ingenious Rebekah, having dressed him in the fragrant festal robes of the princely hunter, covered his smooth skin with the soft, silky hide of the camel-goat, and put into his hand the simulated dainty dish which she had cooked. It is a melancholy thing when either woman's wit or man's sagacity is prostituted to unholy ends. 2. *Boldly avowed.* Entering his father's tent, and approaching within easy reach of the invalid's couch, at the same time imitating Esau's intonations, the heartless impostor calls upon his aged parent to arise and eat of his son's venison, in response to his father's inquiry also openly declaring himself to be Esau; in which was a fourfold offence—against his venerable father, against his absent brother, against himself, and against God. Never is a lie, and seldom is a sin of any kind, single or simple in its criminality. That scheme cannot be a good one of which the first act is a lie. 3. *Persistently maintained.* In the face of his father's searching interrogation, careful examination, and manifest trepidation, Jacob brazens out the imposture he had begun, covering his first falsehood by a second, and his second by a third, in which he verges on the limits of blasphemy, allowing himself to be handled by his aged parent without betraying by a word or sign the base deception he was practising, and at length capping his extraordinary wickedness by a solemn asseveration of his identity with Esau that carried with it in the hearing of Isaac much of the impressiveness and weight of an oath,—"I am thy very son Esau!" It is amazing to what depths of criminality those may fall who once step aside from the straight paths of virtue. 4. *Completely successful.* Critical as the ordeal was through which he passed, he was not detected. So God sometimes allows wicked schemes to prosper, accomplishing his own designs thereby, though neither approving of the schemes nor holding the schemers guiltless.

II. Isaac's benediction of Jacob. The patriarchal blessing which Isaac uttered was—1. *Divinely inspired as to its origin.* It was not within the power of Isaac to either conceive or express it in any arbitrarily selected moment, or in any particular way or place that he might determine. Least of all was it the production of Isaac's ordinary faculties under the physical or mental impulse of delicious viands or paternal affection. It was the outcome of an unseen afflatus of the Divine Spirit upon the venerable patriarch's soul (Heb. xi. 20). 2. *Providentially directed as to its destination.* Intended for the firstborn, it was pronounced upon the younger of his sons. Had Rebekah and Jacob not interposed with their miserable trick, there is reason to suppose that God would have discovered means of defeating the misguided

patriarch's design; perhaps by laying an embargo upon his lips, as he did on Balaam (Numb. xxii. 38); perhaps by miraculously guiding his speech, as afterwards he guided Jacob's hands (ch. xlviii. 14). But none the less is the Divine finger discernible in carrying the heavenly blessing to its predestined recipient, that he does not interfere with Rebekah's craft, but allows it, beneath the guidance of his ordinary providence, to work out its appropriate result. 3. *Richly laden as to its contents.* It embraced—(1) Material enrichment, represented by the dew, corn, and wine, which may also be regarded as symbolic of spiritual treasures; (2) personal advancement in the world and the Church, foreshadowing both the political supremacy and ecclesiastical importance to which Israel should afterwards attain; (3) spiritual influence, emblematic of the religious priesthood enjoyed first by the Hebrew people as a nation, and latterly by Christ, the true Seed of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. 4. *Absolutely permanent as to its duration.* Though Isaac subsequently learnt of the deception which had been practised towards him, he felt that the words he had spoken were beyond recall. This was proof decisive that Isaac spake not of himself, but as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. His own benediction, uttered purely by and from himself, might, and, in the circumstances, probably would, have been revoked; the blessing of Jehovah transmitted through his undesigned act he had no power to cancel.

Learn—1. That those who attempt to deceive others are not unfrequently themselves deceived. 2. That those who enter on a sinful course may speedily sink deeper into sin than they intended. 3. That deception practised by a son against a father, at a mother's instigation, is a monstrous and unnatural display of wickedness. 4. That God can accomplish his own designs by means of man's crimes, without either relieving them of guilt or himself being the author of sin. 5. That the blessing of God maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith. 6. That the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 30.—**And it came to pass** (literally, *and it was*), **as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out**—literally, *and it was* (sc. as soon as, or when) *Jacob only going forth had gone;* i. e. had just gone out (Ewald, Keil), rather than was in the act of coming out (Murphy), since the narrative implies that the brothers did not meet on this occasion—**from the presence of Isaac his father, that** (literally, *and*) **Esau his brother came in from his hunting.**

Ver. 31.—**And he also had made savoury meat** (*vide* ver. 4), **and brought it unto his father, and said unto him, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison**—compared with Jacob's exhortation to his aged parent (ver. 19), the language of Esau has, if anything, more affection in its tones—**that thy soul may bless me.** Esau was at this time a man of mature age, being either fifty-seven or seventy-seven years old, and must have been acquainted with the heavenly oracle (ch. xxv. 23) that assigned the precedence in the theocratic line to Jacob. Either, therefore, he must have supposed that his claim to the blessing was not thereby affected, or he was guilty of conniving at Isaac's scheme for resisting the Divine will. Indignation at Jacob's duplicity and baseness, combined with sympathy for Esau in his supposed wrongs, sometimes prevents a just appreciation of the exact position occupied by the latter in this extraordinary transaction. Instead of branding Jacob as a shameless deceiver, and hurling against his fair fame the most opprobrious epithets, may it not be that, remembering the previously-expressed will of Heaven, the real supplanter was Esau, who as an accomplice of his father was seeking secretly, unlawfully, and feloniously to appropriate to himself a blessing which had already been, not obscurely, designated as Jacob's? On this hypothesis the miserable craft of Jacob and Rebekah was a lighter crime than that of Isaac and Esau.

Ver. 32.—**And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou?** The language indicates the patriarch's surprise. **And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.** The emphatic tone of Esau's answer may have been dictated by a suspicion, already awakened by Isaac's question, that all was not right (Inglis). Esau's claim to be regarded as Isaac's firstborn, after having bartered away his birthright, is considered by some to be unwarranted (Wordsworth); but it is doubtful if Esau attached the importance to the term "firstborn" which this objection presupposes.

Ver. 33.—**And Isaac trembled very ex-**

ceedingly,—literally, *feared a great fear, to a great degree;* shuddered in great terror above measure (Lange). The renderings ἐξέστη δὲ Ἰσαὰκ ἔκστασιν μεγάλην σφόδρα (LXX.), *Expavit stupore, et ultra quam credi potest admirans* (Vulgate), "wondered with an exceedingly great admiration" (Onkelos), emphasise the patriarch's astonishment, the first even suggesting the idea of a trance or supernatural elevation of the prophetic consciousness (Augustine); whereas that which is depicted is rather the alarm produced within the patriarch's breast, not so much by the discovery that his plan had been defeated by a woman's wit and a son's craft — these would have kindled indignation rather than fear—as by the awakening conviction not that he had blessed, but that he had been seeking to bless, the wrong person (Calvin, Willet)—**and said, Who? where is he**—*quis est et ubi est?* (Jarchi); but rather, who then is he? (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Lange)—**that hath taken venison,**—literally, *the one hunting prey* = that hunted, or has hunted, the part. having the force of a perfect (*vide* Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 335)—**and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed**—thus before Jacob is named he pronounces the Divine sentence that the blessing is irrevocable (Lange).

Ver. 34.—**And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry**—literally, *he cried a cry, great and bitter exceedingly;* expressive of the poignant anguish of his soul (Kalisch, Bush), if not also of his rage against his brother (Philo, Eusebius), of his envy of the blessing (Menochius, Lapide), and of the desperation of his spirit (Calvin). Cf. Heb. xii. 17—**and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.** A proof of Esau's blind incredulity in imagining it to be within his father's power to impart benedictions promiscuously without and beyond the Divine sanction (Calvin); a sign that he supposed the theocratic blessing capable of division, and as dependent upon his lamentations and prayers as upon the caprice of his father (Lange); an evidence that "now at last he had learned in some measure adequately to value" the birthright (Candlish); but if so it was *post horam.*

Ver. 35.—**And he** (*i. e.* Isaac) **said, Thy brother came with subtilty,**—with wisdom (Onkelos); rather with fraud, μετὰ δόλου (LXX.)—**and hath taken away thy blessing**—*i. e.* the blessing which I thought was thine, since Isaac now understood that from the first it had been designed for Jacob.

Ver. 36.—**And he** (Esau) **said, Is he not rightly named Jacob?**—literally, *is it that one has called his name Jacob?* הֲכִי being employed when the reason is unknown (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 324). On the meaning of Jacob cf. ch. xxv. 26—**for** (literally, *and*) **he hath supplanted me** (a paronomasia on the word Jacob) **these two times**—or, already twice; זֶה being used adverbially in the sense of *now* (Gesenius, 'Grammar,' § 122). The precise import of Esau's exclamation has been rendered, "Has he not been justly (δικαίως, LXX.; *juste*, Vulgate; rightly, A. V.) named Supplanter from supplanting?" (Rosenmüller). "Is it because he was named Jacob that he hath now twice supplanted me?" (Ainsworth, Bush). "Has he received the name Jacob from the fact that he has twice outwitted me?" (Keil). "Shall he get the advantage of me because he was thus inadvertently named Jacob?" (Lange). "Has in truth his name been called Jacob?" (Kalisch). All agree in bringing out that Esau designed to indicate a correspondence between Jacob's name and Jacob's practice. **He took away my birthright;**—this was scarcely correct, since Esau voluntarily sold it (ch. xxv. 33)—**and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing.** Neither was this exactly accurate, since the blessing did not originally belong to Esau, however he may have imagined that it did. **And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?** The question indicates that Esau had no proper conception of the spiritual character of the blessing which his brother had obtained.

Ver. 37.—**And Isaac answered and said unto Esau** (repeating the substance of the blessing already conferred on Jacob), **Behold, I have made him thy lord,**—literally, *behold, a lord* (vide on ver. 29) *have I constituted him to thee;* Isaac hereby intimating that in pronouncing the words of blessing he had been speaking under a celestial impulse, and therefore with absolute authority—**and all his brethren have I given to him for servants** (for the fulfilment *vide* 2 Sam. viii. 14), **and with corn and wine have I sustained him:**—*i. e.* declared that by these he shall be sustained or supported (cf. ver. 28)—**and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?**

Ver. 38.—**And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father?** Not as desiring either the reversal of the patriarchal sentence upon Jacob, which he appears to have understood to be irrevocable, or an extension of its gracious provisions, so as to include him as well as Jacob; but as soliciting such a benediction as would place him, at least in respect of temporalities, on a level with the favourite of Rebekah, either because he did not recognise the spiritual character of the covenant blessing, or because,

though recognising it, he was willing to let it go. **Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept** (cf. Heb. xii. 17). "Those tears expressed, indeed, sorrow for his forfeiture, but not for the sinful levity by which it had been incurred. They were ineffectual (*i. e.* they did not lead to genuine repentance) because Esau was incapable of true repentance" (*vide* Delitzsch on Heb. xii. 17).

Ver. 39.—**And Isaac his father** (moved by the tearful earnestness of Esau) **answered and said unto him,**—still speaking under inspiration, though it is doubtful whether what he spoke was a real, or only an apparent, blessing—(*vide infra*)—**Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.** Literally, *from* (מִן) *the fatnesses* (or fat places) *of the earth, and from the dew of heaven;* a substantial repetition of the temporal blessing bestowed on Jacob (ver. 28), with certain important variations, such as the omission of plenty of corn and wine at the close, and of the name of Elohim at the commencement, of the benediction (Vulgate, Luther, Calvin, Ainsworth, Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary'); though, by assigning to the preposition a privative rather than a partitive sense, it is readily transformed into "a modified curse"—*behold, away from the fatnesses of the earth,* &c., *shall thy dwelling be,* meaning that, in contrast to the land of Canaan, the descendants of Esau should be located in a sterile region (Tuch, Knobel, Kurtz, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy). In support of this latter rendering it is urged (1) that it is grammatically admissible; (2) that it corresponds with the present aspect of Idumæa, which is "on the whole a dreary and unproductive land;" (3) that it agrees with the preceding statement that every blessing had already been bestowed upon Jacob; and (4) that it explains the play upon the words "fatness" and "dew," which are here chosen to describe a state of matters exactly the opposite to that which was declared to be the lot of Jacob. On the other hand, it is felt to be somewhat arbitrary to assign to the preposition a partitive sense in ver. 28 and a privative in ver. 39. Though called in later times (Mal. i. 3) a waste and desolate region, it may not have been originally so, or only in comparison with Canaan; while according to modern travellers the glens and mountain terraces of Edom, covered with rich soil, only want an industrious population to convert the entire region into "one of the wealthiest, as it is one of the most picturesque, countries in the world."

Ver. 40.—**And by thy sword shalt thou live,**—literally, *upon thy sword shalt thou be,* i. e. thy maintenance shall depend on thy sword; a prediction that Esau's descendants should be a warlike and tumultuous people of predatory habits (cf. Josephus, B. I., iv. 4)—**and shalt serve thy brother;**—a prediction afterwards fulfilled (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 47; 2 Sam. viii. 14; 1 Kings xi. 16; 2 Kings xiv. 7—10; 2 Chron. xx. 22—25)—**and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.** The verb רוּד, used of beasts which have broken the yoke and wander freely about (Gesenius, Fürst), appears to hint at an incessant restlessness on the part of Edom while under Israel's yoke which should eventually terminate in regaining their independence. The exact rendering of the clause is obscure, but perhaps means that when Edom should roam about as a freebooter (Lange), or should revolt (Alford), or should toss, shake, or struggle against the yoke (Vulgate, Keil, Hengstenberg, 'Speaker's Commentary), he should succeed. Other renderings are, when thou shalt bear rule (Kimchi), when thou shalt repent (Jarchi), when thou shalt be strong (Samaritan), when thou prevailest (Murphy), when thou shalt truly desire it (Kalisch), when thou shalt pull down (LXX.); because thou art restless (Hävernick).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 30—40.—*The stolen blessing: a domestic drama.*—3. *Isaac and Esau, or the hunter's lamentation.* I. ISAAC'S STARTLING DISCOVERY. 1. *Unexpectedly made.* The return of Esau from the hunting-field with a dish of venison was a sudden and most unpleasant revelation to the aged patriarch, showing that in some inexplicable manner he had been out-manœuvred, and, as it were, constrained against his will to bestow the blessing upon Jacob. So in common life it is not unfrequently seen that the unexpected is that which happens, that wicked schemes prove abortive, that the deceiver is himself deceived—"the engineer hoist on his own petard,"—and that men are often made the involuntary and unconscious instruments of furthering the will of Heaven. 2. *Tremblingly received.* Apprehending what had taken place, the blind old invalid "feared a great fear exceedingly," saddened with an inward horror, not through disappointment at the failure of his scheme, or indignation at the wicked craft and heartless duplicity of Rebekah's favourite, but alarm at his own

sinful intention which God had thus manifestly seen and thwarted. It is well when the soul trembles at a discovery of its own wickedness. Gracious souls dread nothing more than standing on the verge of sin. 3. *Pathetically acknowledged.* "Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing;" and, "I have blessed him: yea, and he shall be blessed." It becomes parents to commiserate their children's misfortunes, and especially to sorrow if they miss the blessings of salvation. They who lack these, even when they do not wish to obtain them, are objects of profoundest pity. 4. *Meekly acquiesced in.* Recognising the hand of God in the remarkable transaction in which he had been an actor, with true humility and faith the venerable patriarch bowed before the will of the Supreme. Neither Esau's prayers and tears, nor his own paternal affections, could stimulate so much as a wish to undo what had been done. To a truly pious heart the will of God is final. "Thy will be done" is the language of faith.

II. ESAU'S SINGULAR BEHAVIOUR. 1. *His bitter lamentation for himself.* Esau's "great and exceeding bitter cry" was expressive not of heartfelt grief for his sinful levity in parting with the birthright, or guileful behaviour in attempting to secure the blessing; but (1) of deep mortification at being over-reached by his crafty brother; (2) of remorseful chagrin at not recovering the blessing he had practically surrendered in the sale of the birthright; (3) of earnest desire to induce Isaac to revoke the words he had spoken. The repentance which he sought carefully with tears (Heb. xii. 17) was not his own change of heart, but his father's change of mind. 2. *His wrathful indignation against his brother.* "Is he not rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times." A statement not quite accurate; but angry men are seldom remarkable for accuracy of statement; a statement also expressive of hatred against Jacob, and incensed brothers often call each other bad names. Good men should be angry and sin not. Indignation, even when righteous, should be restrained. 3. *His tearful request to his father.* "Bless me, me also, O my father!" Having lost the blessing of the covenant, he was still desirous of possessing some sort of blessing. Wicked men often covet the material advantages of religion who have no desire to share in its spiritual enrichments.

III. ISAAC'S SOLEMN DECLARATION. 1. *Of Esau's subjection to Jacob.* "Behold, I have made him thy lord." A prediction of (1) political subordination, afterwards fulfilled in the conquests of Israel; and (2) of possible salvation to Esau and his descendants through believing recognition of the spiritual ascendancy of Jacob and his seed. 2. *Of Esau's portion from God.* (1) A fat soil. God appoints to all men, individuals and nations, the bounds of their habitation. Inhabitants of fertile regions have a special call to thankfulness. (2) A roving life. Though the warlike character of Esau's descendants was of God's appointment and permission, it is no just inference that savage tribes are as useful as those of settled and improved habits, or that God does not desire the diffusion of civilisation and the elevation of the race. (3) Ultimate independence. Though some nations have been placed in subjection, it is God's will that all should aspire to freedom. Revolt, rebellion, insurrection are sometimes a people's highest duty.

Lessons:—1. The blessing of the covenant is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. 2. Those who despise God's salvation in youth cannot always obtain it in manhood or age. 3. Those who finally come short of eternal life will have no one to blame but themselves. 4. No one need sue in vain for Heaven's favour, since the blessing is not now for one, but for all. 5. There is a difference between penitence and remorse. 6. Though no man can hope to change the mind of God, it is within the power of all men to desire and to effect a change upon their own hearts. 7. The prediction of a nation's or a person's future does not interfere with the free operation of the human will.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 33.—*Jacob's deceit. Esau supplanted.* In this familiar narrative the following points may be distinguished:—

I. ISAAC'S ERROR—connecting a solemn blessing with mere gratification of the senses, neglect of the Divine word, favouritism towards the son less worthy.

II. JACOB'S SUBTILTY and selfishness. The birthright had been sold to him; he might have obtained the blessing by fair agreement. His fear of Esau lay at the root of his deceit. One sin leads on to another. Those who entangle themselves with the world are involved more and more in moral evil.

III. REBEKAH'S AFFECTION was perverted into unmotherly partiality and unwifely treachery to Isaac. The son's guilt rested much on the mother's shoulders, for she laid the plot and prepared the execution of it. All were sad examples of self-assertion destroying the simplicity of faith. And yet—

IV. THE COVENANT GOD over-rules the weakness and error of his people. The blessing was appointed for Jacob. Although pronounced by an instrument blind, foolish, sinful, deceived, it yet is the blessing, which, having been lodged in Isaac, must pass on to the true heir of Isaac, who, according to the promise and prediction, is Jacob.

V. The lower character and standing of Esau and his inferior blessing represents the distinction between THE CHOSEN PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO, WHILE NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL, may yet by connection and intercourse with it derive some portion of the Divine benediction from it. Both in pre-Christian and Christian times there have been nations thus situated.

VI. The LATE REPENTANCE of the supplanted Esau. He found no possibility of averting the consequences of his own error (Heb. xii. 17), no place where repentance would avail to recover that which was lost. The "great and exceeding bitter cry" only reveals the shame, the blessing taken away. Those who, like Esau, despise their place in the family of God are driven out into the fierce opposition of the world; "by their sword" they must live and "serve their brethren."

VII. THE END OF DECEIT IS HATRED, passion, fear, flight, individual and family disorder and suffering. Yet again the merciful hand interposes to over-rule the errors of man. Jacob's flight from Esau's hatred is his preservation from ungodly alliance with heathen neighbours, and the commencement of a wholesome course of discipline by which his character was purged of much of its evil, and his faith deepened and developed.—R.

Ver. 36.—*Unfaithfulness in believers.* "Is not he rightly named Jacob?" Jacob, Israel—how widely different the thoughts suggested by the two names. Both tell of success. But one is the man of craft, who takes by the heel to trip up. The other, as a prince of God (cf. Luke i. 15), prevails through believing prayer. Yet Jacob became Israel, and Israel had once been Jacob. The plant of faith has often to struggle through a hard soil. To understand the lessons of his life, remember—1. In contrast to Esau, he was a man of faith. His desire was for a future and spiritual blessing. He believed that it was to be his, and that belief influenced his life. But—2. His faith was imperfect and partial in its operation, and this led to inconsistencies (cf. Matt. xiv. 29, 30; Gal. ii. 12). Naturally quiet, his life was passed chiefly at home. Godly influences undisturbed by outward life taught him to worship God, and to prize his promise. But he had not proved his armour (cf. 1 Cor. x. 12); and, as often happens, the object of his faith was the means of his trial. His father's purpose in favour of Esau shook his faith (cf. 1 Pet. iv. 18). He yielded to the suggestion to obtain by deceit what God had promised to give (Isa. lix. 1), and earned his brother's taunt, "Is not he rightly named Jacob?" Yet it does not appear that he was conscious of having failed in faith. Consider—

I. THE DANGER OF SELF-DECEIVING (cf. Ezek. xiii. 10). One brought up among godly influences may seem to possess faith. Ways of faith, hopes of faith, may be familiar to him. He may really embrace them, really desire a spiritual prize. But not without cause are we warned (1 Cor. x. 12). Some plan of worldly wisdom, some point of self-seeking or self-indulgence, attracts him; only a little way; not into anything distinctly wrong. Or he falls into indolent self-sufficiency. Then there is a shrinking from close walk with God. Formality takes the place of confidence. All may seem outwardly well; but other powers than God's will are at work within. And if now some more searching trial is sent, some more distinct choice between God and the world, a self-satisfying plea is easily found. And the self-deceit which

led to the fall makes it unfelt. And the path is lighted, but not from God (Isa. l. 11).

II. THE HARM DONE TO OTHERS BY UNFAITHFULNESS OF CHRISTIANS (cf. Rom. ii. 24; xiv. 16). The world is quick to mark inconsistencies of believers. They form an excuse for the careless, a plea for disbelieving the reality of holiness. And for weak Christians they throw the influence of example on the wrong side (cf. 1 Cor. viii. 9). Deeds have more power than words; and the course of a life may be turned by some thoughtless yielding. Nor can the harm be undone even by repentance. The failure is visible, the contrition and seeking pardon are secret. The sins of good men are eagerly retailed. The earnest supplication for pardon and restoration are known to few, and little cared for. The man himself may be forgiven, and rise stronger from his fall; but the poison in the soul of another is still doing its deadly work.

III. THE WAY OF SAFETY. Realise the living Christ (Ephes. iii. 17). Rules of themselves can do little; but to know the love of Christ, to bear it in mind, is power.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 41.—**And Esau hated Jacob**—a proof that he was not penitent, however disappointed and remorseful (cf. Obad. 10, 11; 1 John iii. 12, 15)—**because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him**:—notwithstanding the fact that he too had received an appropriate benediction; a display of envy as well as wrath, another proof of his ungracious character (Gal. v. 21; James iv. 5)—**and Esau said in his heart**,—*i. e.* secretly resolved, though afterwards he must have communicated his intention (*vide* ver. 42)—**The days of mourning for my father are at hand.** The LXX. interpret as a wish on the part of Esau that Isaac might speedily die, in order that the fratricidal act he contemplated might not pain the old man's heart; another rendering (Kalisch) understands him to say that days of grief were in store for his father, as he meant to slay his brother; but the ordinary translation seems preferable (Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy, *et alii*), that Esau only deferred the execution of his unholy purpose because of the near approach, as he imagined, of his father's death. Isaac, however, lived upwards of forty years after this. **Then will I slay my brother Jacob.** That which reconciled Isaac and Ishmael (ch. xxv. 9), the death of a father, is here mentioned as the event which would decisively and finally part Esau and Jacob. Esau's murderous intention Calvin regards as a clear proof of the non-reality of his repentance for his sin, the insincerity of his sorrow for his father, and the intense malignity of his hate against his brother.

Ver. 42.—**And these** (literally, *the*) **words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah**:—not likely by revelation (Augustine), but by some one to whom he had made known his secret purpose (Prov. xxix. 11)—**and she sent and called Jacob her younger son** (to advise him of his danger, being apprehensive lest the passionate soul of the enraged hunter should find it difficult to delay till Isaac's death), **and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.** Literally, *behold thy brother Esau taking vengeance upon thee* (the hithpael of נָחַם meaning properly to comfort oneself, hence to satisfy one's feeling of revenge) *by killing thee.* The translations ἀπειλεῖ (LXX.) and *minatur* (Vulgate), besides being inaccurate, are too feeble to express the fratricidal purpose of Esau.

Vers. 43—45.—**Now therefore, my son, obey my voice**;—*i. e.* be guided by my counsel; a request Rebekah might perhaps feel herself justified in making, not only by her maternal solicitude for Jacob's welfare, but also from the successful issue of her previous stratagem (*vide* on ver. 8)—**and arise, flee thou**—literally, *flee for thyself* (cf. ch. xii. 1; Numb. xxiv. 11; Amos vii. 12)—**to Laban my brother to Haran** (*vide* ch. xi. 31; xxiv. 29); **and tarry with him a few days**,—literally, *days some.* The few days eventually proved to be at least twenty years (*vide* ch. xxxi. 38). It is not probable that Rebekah ever again beheld her favourite son, which was a signal chastisement for her sinful ambition for, and partiality towards, Jacob—**until thy brother's fury turn away; until thy brother's anger turn away from thee**,—the rage of Esau is here described by two different words, the first of which, חֵמָה, from a root signifying to be warm, suggests the heated and inflamed condition of Esau's soul, while the second, אַף, from אָנַף, to breathe through the nostrils, depicts the visible manifestations of that internal fire in hard and quick breathing—**and he forget that which thou hast done to him.** Rebekah apparently had conveniently be-

come oblivious of her own share in the transaction by which Esau had been wronged. **Then will I send, and fetch thee from thence**—which she never did. Man proposes, but God disposes. **Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?** *I. e.* of Jacob by the hand of Esau, and of Esau by the hand of the avenger of blood (ch. ix. 6; cf. 2 Sam. xiv. 6, 7; Calvin, Keil, Rosenmüller, Kalisch), rather than by his own fratricidal act, which would for ever part him from Rebekah (Lange).

Ver. 46.—**And Rebekah said to Isaac** (perhaps already discerning in the contemplated flight to Haran the prospect of a suitable matrimonial alliance for the heir of the promise, and secretly desiring to suggest such a thought to her aged husband), **I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth**:—referring doubtless to Esau's wives (cf. ch. xxvi. 35)—**if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?** Literally, *for what to me life*, i. e. what happiness can I have in living? It is impossible to exonerate Rebekah altogether from a charge of duplicity even in this. Unquestionably Esau's wives may have vexed her, and her faith may have perceived that Jacob's wife must be sought for amongst their own kindred; but her secret reason for sending Jacob to Haran was not to seek a wife, as she seems to have desired Isaac to believe, but to elude the fury of his incensed brother.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 41—46.—*The stolen blessing: a domestic drama.*—4. *Rebekah and Esau, or fratricide frustrated.* I. THE MURDEROUS DESIGN OF ESAU. 1. *The ostensible reason.* "Because of the blessing wherewith his father had blessed Jacob." No argument can justify wilful and deliberate homicide; least of all an excuse so lame and feeble as that of Esau. The blessing Jacob had obtained was one which he himself had formerly despised and practically sold. If Jacob had been guilty of stealing it from him, as he imagined, it was only what he had been attempting to do with reference to Jacob. Besides, in so far as the blessing was an object of desire to Esau, viz., for its material advantages, he had himself received a blessing not greatly dissimilar. There was therefore no sufficient cause for Esau's hostility towards his brother. 2. *The impelling motive.* "Hate"—the essential spirit of murder (Matt. v. 22; 1 John iii. 15). Esau's causeless hatred of Jacob was typical of the world's enmity against the Church: in its ground, the Church's enjoyment of the blessing; in its spirit, bitter and implacable; in its manifestation, persecution and oppression (1 John iii. 13). 3. *The decorous restraint.* "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother." Wicked men who resist all the influences of piety are not always able to surmount the barriers of public opinion. Though Esau had no scruples on the score of conscience as to killing Jacob, he had some scruples on the ground of decency as to doing it while his father lived. Persons who have no religion not unfrequently do homage to the appearance of religion. 4. *The providential discovery.* Though Esau originally resolved on Jacob's murder in secret, he appears to have inadvertently disclosed his purpose to another, who forthwith communicated his intention to Rebekah. Those who have secrets to keep should tell them to no one; but Divine providence has wisely and mercifully arranged that guilty secrets should be ill to keep. "Murder will out." 5. *The inglorious defeat.* The information brought to Rebekah enabled her to counterwork Esau's design, and thus a second time was Esau outwitted by a woman. It is obvious that some sons are not so clever as their mothers.

II. THE PRUDENT COUNSEL OF REBEKAH. 1. *Hastily formed.* The shrewd sagacity of Isaac's wife at once perceived an outlet from the snare. The woman's wit that had cheated Isaac was not likely to be baffled with blustering Esau. Calling Jacob from the herds, she told him of his brother's murderous design, and detailed her own scheme for his protection. 2. *Clearly explained.* He should immediately betake himself to Haran, and seek shelter for a season beside his uncle Laban and his cousins. Though Rebekah does not mention the propriety of looking for a wife, it is apparent that the possibility of Jacob's finding one was present to her thoughts. 3. *Skilfully urged.* Arguments were not long in coming to Rebekah's aid. (1) His brother's anger would soon burn out. (2) His absence accordingly would not require to be long. (3) If he did not go he was certain to be killed, in which case

Esau would fall a victim to judicial retribution, and she, a heart-broken mother, would be deprived of both her sons in one day. (4) She was his mother, and her advice should be received with filial reverence and submission. 4. *Adroitly carried through.* Securing her son's compliance, there was still the difficulty how to obtain the assent of Isaac. This she does by leading Isaac himself to suggest the propriety of Jacob's going north to Padan-aram in search of a wife; and to this she turns the thoughts of Isaac by expressing the hope that Jacob will not imitate his brother by marrying daughters of the land, a calamity, she informs her husband, which would render her already miserable life scarcely worth retaining. It was prudent in Rebekah to direct the mind of Isaac to the propriety of getting Jacob married, but there is not wanting a trace of that craftiness which was Rebekah's peculiar infirmity.

Learn—1. That the world's hostility to the Church is wholly unreasonable and unjustifiable. 2. That wicked devices against God's people are sure eventually to be overturned. 3. That bad men sometimes wear a semblance of religion. 4. That good mothers grieve for the wickedness of bad, and work for the safety of good, sons. 5. That while wicked matches in their children are a burden to gracious parents, it should be a parent's aim to secure pious wives for their sons, and Christian husbands for their daughters.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 46.—*Rebekah, the disappointed.* "What good shall my life do me?" Rebekah as a mother doubtless promised herself much joy in her children. They grew up. Esau becomes wayward, Jacob becomes a wanderer. Rebekah yielded to favouritism (ver. 13), and schemed to carry her point. She cherished a treacherous spirit, and led Jacob to sin. She was ambitious not for herself, but for Jacob. This is like woman; she lives in others. She was reckless as to results, but when they came she found them bitter. "She loved Jacob more than truth, more than God." This was idolatry. No wonder she utters the exclamation, "What good shall my life do me?" She was a disappointed woman. Her favourite son was in hiding from the wrath of a wronged brother, and Esau was indifferent towards her and angry. If life is not to be a disappointment we must beware of—

I. UNSCRUPULOUS SCHEMING.

II. AFFECTIONS THAT CARE MORE FOR HAPPINESS THAN HONOUR.

III. OF IDOLATRY, COVETOUSNESS, AND NEGLECT OF GOD'S CLAIMS.

IV. OF IGNORING THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

V. OF IGNORANCE AS TO THE TRUE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS.

Rebekah began well. Her advent unto the encampment was a "comfort" to Isaac. She seems to have been "weary of life," and asks "what good it shall do her." Some who ask at this day "whether life is worth living" may find a suggestion in Rebekah's conduct as to the reason wherefore they ask the question.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 1.—**And Isaac** (recognising the wisdom and propriety of Rebekah's suggestion that a bride should now be sought for him whom God had so unmistakably declared to be the heir of the theocratic promise) **called Jacob** (to his bed-side), **and blessed him,**—in enlarged form, renewing the benediction previously given (ch. xxvii. 27)—**and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan** (cf. ch. xxiv. 3). Intermarriage with the women of the land was expressly forbidden to the theocratic heir, while his attention was directed to his mother's kindred.

Ver. 2.—**Arise, go to Padan-aram** (*vide* ch. xxiv. 10; xxv. 20; xxvii. 43), **to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father;**—(*vide* ch. xxiv. 24). If yet alive, Bethuel must have been very old, since he was Isaac's cousin, and probably born many years before the son of Abraham—**and take thee a wife from thence**—though Isaac's wife was found for him, he does not think of imitating Abraham and despatching another Eliezer in search of a spouse for Rebekah's son. Probably he saw that Jacob could attend to

that business sufficiently without **assistance** from others—**of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother** (*vide* ch. xxiv. 29). "Isaac appears to entertain no doubt of Jacob's success, which might be the more probable since the same reason which kept Jacob from marrying in Canaan might prevent Laban's daughters from being married in Haran, the worshippers of the Lord being few" (Inglis).

Ver. 3.—**And God Almighty**—El Shaddai (*vide* ch. xvii. 1)—**bless thee,**—the Abrahamic benediction in its fullest form was given by El Shaddai (*vide* ch. xvii. 1—8)—**and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be**—literally, *and thou shalt become* (or grow to)—**a multitude**—an assembly, or congregation, or crowd called together, from a root signifying to call together (Gesenius), or to sweep up together (Fürst); corresponding to ἐκκλησία in Greek—**of people.**

Ver. 4.—**And give thee the blessing of Abraham,**—*i. e.* promised to Abraham (*vide* ch. xii. 2; xxii. 17, 18). The additions of τοῦ πατρός μου (LXX.), אביך = τοῦ πατρὸς σου (Samaritan), are unwarranted—**to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger,** —literally, *the land of thy sojournings* (ch. xvii. 8)—**which God gave unto Abraham**—by promise (cf. ch. xii. 7; xiii. 15; xv. 7, 18; xvii. 8).

Ver. 5.—**And Isaac sent away Jacob** (Rebekah only counselled, Isaac commanded): **and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian** (*vide* Hosea xii. 12), **the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.** The historian here perhaps intentionally gives the first place to Jacob.

Vers. 6—9.—**When** (literally, *and*) **Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge,**—literally, *in his blessing him* (forming a parenthesis), *and he commanded him*—**saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and that** (literally, *and*) **Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone** (or went) **to Padan-aram; and Esau seeing that** (more correctly, *saw that*) **the daughters of Canaan pleased not** (literally, *were evil in the eyes of*) **Isaac his father; then** (literally, *and*) **went Esau unto Ishmael** (*i. e.* the family or tribe of Ishmael, aiming in this likely to please his father), **and took unto the wives which he had** (so that they were neither dead nor divorced) **Mahalath** (called Bashemath in ch. xxxvi. 3) **the daughter of Ishmael** (and therefore Esau's half-cousin by the father's side, Ishmael, who was now dead thirteen years, having been Isaac's half-brother) **Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth,**—Ishmael's firstborn (*vide* ch. xxv. 13)—**to be his wife.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—9.—*Jacob and Esau, or diverging paths.* I. Jacob's journey to Padan-aram. 1. *The path of duty.* Entered on in obedience to his mother's wish and his father's commandment, it was an evidence of filial piety. It is the token of a good son that he "hears the instruction of his father, and forsakes not the law of his mother" (Prov. i. 8). Sons come to mature age should respect and, where not inconsistent with allegiance to God, yield submission to parental authority (Prov. vi. 20; Mal. i. 6; Ephes. vi. 1—3). 2. *The path of blessing.* The benediction already bestowed upon Jacob was repeated with greater amplitude and tenderness before he left the patriarchal tent. Happy the youth who enters upon life's journey carrying on his head and in his heart a father's blessing! much more who goes forth beneath the canopy of Heaven's benediction! and this is ever the experience of him who travels by the way of filial obedience. Pious children seldom fail to come to honour, and never want the favour of the Lord (Ps. xxxvii. 26; Prov. iv. 20—22; viii. 32). 3. *The path of promise.* In addition to his father's blessing and the Almighty's benediction, Jacob carried with him as he left Beersheba the promise of a seed and an inheritance to be in due time acquired; and in like manner now has the saint exceeding great and precious promises to cheer him in his heavenward pilgrimage, promises the full realisation of which is attainable only in the future (John xiv. 2; 1 Pet. i. 4). 4. *The path of hope.* Sad and sorrowful as Jacob's heart must have been as he kissed his mother and bade farewell to Isaac, it was at least sustained by pleasant expectation. Gilding the horizon of his future was the prospect of a wife to love as Isaac had loved Rebekah, and to be the mother of the seed of promise. So the pathway of the children of promise, though often painful, arduous, and protracted, is always lighted by the star of hope, and always points to a bright and beautiful beyond.

II. Esau's marriage with Mahalath. 1. *The way of sin.* His former wives

being neither dead nor divorced, the conduct of Esau in adding to them a third was wrong. 2. *The way of shame.* In the selection of Ishmael's daughter he hoped to please his father, but was apparently indifferent about the judgment of either Rebekah or Jehovah. Daring transgressors, like Esau, rather glory in their shame than feel abashed at their wickedness. 3. *The way of sorrow.* If not to himself, at least to his pious parents, this fresh matrimonial alliance could not fail to be a grief. The daughter of Ishmael was certainly better than a daughter of the Hittites, being almost as near a relative on Isaac's side as Rachel and Leah were on Rebekah's; but, unlike Rachel and Leah, who belonged to the old family stock (the Terachites) in Mesopotamia, Mahalath descended from a branch which had been removed from the Abrahamic tree.

Learn—1. The care which pious parents should take to see their sons well married. 2. The piety which children should delight to show to their parents. 3. The connection which subsists between true religion and prosperity. 4. The inevitable tendency of sin to produce shame and sorrow. 5. The wickedness of violating God's law of marriage.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—9.—*Life with, and life without, God.* The divergence of the two representative men is seen in this short statement of their marriage relations. 1. Domestic life under the blessing of God and apart from that blessing. 2. The true blessing is the blessing of Abraham, the blessing which God has already provided, promised, and secured. 3. The heir of the blessing must be sent away and learn by experience how to use it. 4. The disinherited man, who has scorned his opportunity, cannot recover it by his own devices. Esau is still Esau. Polygamy was suffered, but never had the blessing of God upon it.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 10.—**And Jacob went out from Beersheba,**—in obedience to his father's commandment to seek a wife (ver. 2), but also in compliance with his mother's counsel to evade the wrath of Esau (ch. xxvii. 43; cf. Hosea xii. 12. On Beersheba *vide* ch. xxi. 31; xxvi. 33—**and went towards Haran**—probably along the route traversed by Abraham's servant (cf. ch. xxiv. 10).

Ver. 11.—**And he lighted upon a certain place,**—literally, *he struck upon the place; i. e.* either the place best suited for him to rest in (Inglis), or the place appointed for him by God (Ainsworth, Bush), or more probably the well-known place afterwards mentioned (Keil, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Situated in the mountains of Ephraim, about three hours north of Jerusalem, it was not reached after one, but after several days' journey (cf. ch. xxii. 4)—**and tarried there all night, because the sun was set;**—being either remote from the city Luz when overtaken by darkness, or unwilling to enter the town; not because he hated the inhabitants (Josephus), but because he was a stranger—**and he took of the stones of that place,**—*i. e.* one of the stones (*vide* ver. 18). "The track (of pilgrims) winds through an uneven valley, covered, as with gravestones, by large sheets of bare rock; some few here and there standing up like the cromlechs of Druidical monuments" (Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 219; cf. 'Lectures on Jewish Church,' p. 59)—**and put them for his pillows,**—literally, *and put for his head-bolster*, the word signifying that which is at the head of any one (cf. 1 Sam. xix. 13; xxvi. 7, 11, 16; 1 Kings xix. 6)—**and lay down in that place to sleep** (cf. ch. xix. 4; 1 Sam. iii. 5, 6, 9).

Ver. 12.—**And he dreamed.** This dream, which has been pronounced "beautifully ingenious," "clever," and "philosophical," the work of a later Hebrew poet, and not of Jacob (De Wette), was not wonderful considering the state of mind and body in which he must have been—fatigued by travel, saddened by thoughts of home, doubtless meditating on his mother, and more than likely pondering the great benediction of his aged and, to all appearance, dying father. Yet while these circumstances may account for the mental framework of the dream, the dream itself was Divinely sent. **And behold a ladder**—the rough stones of the mountain appearing to form themselves into a vast staircase (Stanley, Bush)—**set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:**—symbolically intimating the fact of a real, uninterrupted, and close communication be-

tween heaven and earth, and in particular between God in his glory and man in his solitude and sin—**and behold the angels of God**—literally, *the messengers of Elohim*, i. e. the angels (Ps. ciii. 20, 21; civ. 4; Heb. i. 14)—**ascending and descending on it**—*vide* John i. 51, which shows that Christ regarded either the ladder in Jacob's vision as an emblem of himself, the one Mediator between God and man (Calvin, Luther, Ainsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy), or, what is more probable, Jacob himself as a type of him, the Son of man, in whom the living intercourse between earth and heaven depicted in the vision of the angel-trodden staircase was completely fulfilled (Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Lange, Bush).

Ver. 13.—**And, behold,**—"the dream-vision is so glorious that the narrator represents it by a threefold הִנֵּה "(Lange)—**the Lord stood above it,**—the change in the Divine name is not to be explained by assigning vers. 13—16 to the Jehovistic editor (Tuch, Bleek) or to a subsequent redactor (Davidson), since without it the Elohistic document would be abrupt, if not incomplete (Kalisch), but by recalling the fact that it is not the general providence of the Deity over his creature man, but the special superintendence of the God of Abraham and of Isaac over his chosen people, that the symbolic ladder was intended to depict (Hengstenberg)—**and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac**:—thus not simply proclaiming his personal name Jehovah, but announcing himself as the Elohim who had solemnly entered into covenant with his ancestors, and who had now come, in virtue of that covenant, to renew to him the promises he had previously given them—**the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed**—given to Abraham, ch. xiii. 15; to Isaac, ch. xxvi. 3.

Ver. 14.—**And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth,**—promised to Abraham, ch. xiii. 16; to Isaac, under a different emblem, ch. xxvi. 4—**and thou shalt spread abroad** (literally, *break forth*) **to the west, and to the east, to the north, and to the south**:—(cf. ch. xiii. 14; Deut. xii. 20). In its ultimate significance this points to the world-wide universality of the kingdom of Christ (Murphy)—**and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed** (*vide* ch. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18 (Abraham); xxvi. 4 (Isaac).

Ver. 15.—**And, behold, I am with thee,**—spoken to Isaac (ch. xxvi. 24); again to Jacob (ch. xxxi. 3); afterwards to Christ's disciples (Matt. xxviii. 20)—**and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest,**—literally, *in all thou goest* = in all thy goings (cf. ch. xlviii. 16; Ps. cxxi. 5, 7, 8)—**and will bring thee again into this land**;—equivalent to an intimation that his present journey to Padan-aram was not without the Divine sanction, though apparently it had been against the will of God that Isaac should leave the promised land (*vide* ch. xxiv. 6, 8)—**for I will not leave thee,**—a promise afterwards repeated to Israel (Deut. xxxi. 6, 8), to Joshua (ch. i. 5), to Solomon (1 Chron. xxviii. 20), to the poor and needy (Isa. xli. 17), to Christians (Heb. xiii. 7)—**until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of**—cf. Balaam's testimony to the Divine faithfulness (Numb. xxiii. 19), and Joshua's (ch. xxi. 45), and Solomon's (1 Kings viii. 56). It is impossible, in connection with this sublime theophany granted to Jacob at Bethel, not to recall the similar Divine manifestation vouchsafed to Abraham beneath the starry firmament at Hebron (*vide* ch. xv. 1).

Ver. 16.—**And Jacob awaked out of his sleep** (during which he had seen and talked with Jehovah), **and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew** it **not.** Jacob does not here learn the doctrine of the Divine omnipresence for the first time (Knobel), but now discovers that the covenant God of Abraham revealed himself at other than consecrated places (Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Murphy); or perhaps simply gives expression to his astonishment at finding that whereas he fancied himself alone, he was in reality in the company of God—*se plus adeptum esse quam sperare ausus fuisset* (Calvin).

Ver. 17.—**And he was afraid,**—so were Moses (Exod. xx. 18, 19), Job (ch. xlii. 5, 6), Isaiah (ch. vi. 5), Peter (Luke v. 8), John (Rev. i. 17, 18), at similar discoveries of the Divine presence—**and said, How dreadful is this place!**—*i. e.* how to be feared! how awe-inspiring! φοβερὸς (LXX.), *terribilis* (Vulgate)—**this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.** Not literally, but figuratively, the place where God dwells, and the entrance to his glorious abode (Keil); the idea that Jacob was "made aware by the dream that he had slept on one of those favoured spots singled out for a future sanctuary, and was fearful that he had sinned by employing it for a profane purpose" (Kalisch), being fanciful.

Ver. 18.—**And Jacob rose up early in the morning** (cf. ch. xix. 27; xxii. 3), **and took the stone that he had put for his pillows** (*vide supra*), **and set it up for a pillar**—literally, *set it up, a pillar* (or something set upright, hence a statue or monument); not as an object of worship, a sort of fetish, but as a memorial of the vision (Calvin, Keil, Murphy; cf. ch. xxxi. 45; xxxv. 14; Josh. iv. 9, 20; xxiv. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 12)—**and poured oil upon the top of it.** *Quasi signum consecrationis* (Calvin), and not because he

regarded it as in itself invested with any degree of sanctity. The worship of sacred stones (Bætylia), afterwards prevalent among the Greeks, Romans, Hindoos, Arabs, and Germans, though by some (Kuenen, Oort; *vide* 'The Bible for Young People,' vol. i. p. 231) regarded as one of the primeval forms of worship among the Hebrews, was expressly interdicted by the law of Moses (cf. Exod. xxiii. 24; xxxiv. 13; Levit. xxvi. 1; Deut. xii. 3; xvi. 22). It was probably a heathen imitation of the rite here recorded, though by some authorities (Keil, Knobel, Lange) the Bætylian worship is said to have been connected chiefly with meteoric stones which were supposed to have descended from some divinity; as, *e. g.*, the stone in Delphi sacred to Apollo; that in Emesa, on the Orontes, consecrated to the sun; the angular rock at Pessinus in Phrygia worshipped as hallowed by Cybele; the black stone in the Kaaba at Mecca believed to have been brought from heaven by the angel Gabriel (*vide* Kalisch *in loco*). That the present narrative was a late invention, "called into existence by a desire" on the part of the priests and prophets of Yahweh (Jehovah) "to proclaim the high antiquity of the sanctuary at Bethel, and to make a sacred stone harmless" ('The Bible for Young People,' vol. i. p. 231), is pure assumption. The circumstance that the usage here mentioned is nowhere else in Scripture countenanced (except in ch. xxxv. 14, with reference to this same pillar) forms a sufficient pledge of the high antiquity of the narrative (*vide* Hävernick's 'Introd.,' § 20).

Ver. 19.—**And he called the name of that place Bethel**—*i. e.* house of God. Rosenmüller and Kalisch find a connection between Bethel and Bætylia, the former regarding Bætylia as a corruption of Bethel, and the latter viewing Bethel as the Hebraised form of Bætylion. Keil objects to both that the interchange of τ in βαιτύλιον and θ in βαιθήλ would be perfectly inexplicable. On the site of Bethel (Beitin) *vide* ch. xii. 8. **But the name of that city** was called **Luz at the first.** Originally the Canaanitish town, built according to Calvin after this event, was called Luz, or "almond tree," a name it continued to bear until the conquest (Judges i. 23). From the circumstances recorded in the narrative, Jacob called the spot where he slept (in the vicinity of Luz) Bethel—the designation afterwards extending to the town (ch. xxxv. 6). Until the conquest both titles appear to have been used—Luz by the Canaanites, Bethel by the Israelites. When the conquest was completed the Hebrew name was substituted for the Hittite, the sole survivor of the captured city building another Luz in another part of the country (*vide* Judges i. 26).

Vers. 20, 21.—**And Jacob vowed a vow,**—not in any mercenary or doubtful spirit, but as an expression of gratitude for the Divine mercy (Calvin), as the soul's full and free acceptance of the Lord to be its own God (Murphy), as the instinctive impulse of the new creature (Candlish)—**saying, If** (not the language of uncertainty, but equivalent to "since," or "forasmuch as;" Jacob by faith both appropriating and anticipating the fulfilment of the preceding promise) **God** (Elohim; for the reason of which *vide infra*) **will be with me,**—as he has promised (ver. 15), and as I believe he will—**and will keep me in this way that I go,**—a particular appropriation of the general promise (ver. 15) —**and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on** (*i. e.* all the necessaries of life, included, though not specially mentioned, in the preceding promise), **so that I come again to my father's house**—also guaranteed by God (ver. 15), and here accepted by the patriarch—**in peace** (*i. e.* especially free from Esau's avenging threats); **then shall the Lord be my God**—literally, *and Jehovah will be to me for Elohim* (Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, Keil, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though the received translation is not without support (LXX., Vulgate, Syriac, Calvin, Michaelis, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth); but to have bargained and bartered with God in the way which this suggests before assenting to accept him as an object of trust and worship would have been little less than criminal. Accordingly, the clause is best placed in the protasis of the sentence, which then practically reads, "if Elohim will be Jehovah to me, and if Jehovah will be to me Elohim" (*vide* Hengstenberg, 'Introduction,' vol. i. p. 358).

Ver. 22.—**And** (or then, the apodosis now commencing) **this stone which I have set for a pillar** (*vide* on ver. 18) **shall be God's house**—Bethel, meaning that he would afterwards erect there an altar for the celebration of Divine worship—a resolution which was subsequently carried out (*vide* ch. xxxv. 1, 15). "The pillar or cairn or cromlech of Bethel must have been looked upon by the Israelites, and may be still looked upon in thought by us, as the precursor of every "house of God" that has since arisen in the Jewish and Christian world—the temple, the cathedral, the church, the chapel; nay, more, of those secret places of worship that are marked by no natural beauty and seen by no human eye—the closet, the catacomb, the thoroughfare of the true worshipper" (Stanley's 'Jewish Church,' lect. iii. p. 60). **And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.** Literally, *giving I will give the tenth* (cf. ch. xiv. 20). The case of Jacob affords another proof that the practice of voluntary tithing was known and observed antecedent to the time of Moses

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 10—22.—*Jacob at Bethel, or heaven opened.* I. THE LONELY SLEEPER. 1. *His desolate condition.* Exiled from home, fleeing from the murderous resentment of a brother, o'er-canopied by the star-lit firmament, remote from human habitation, and encompassed by a heathen population, on the bleak summit of the Bethel plateau, upwards of sixty miles from Beersheba, the wandering son of Isaac makes his evening couch with a stone slab for his pillow, an emblem of many another footsore and dejected traveller upon life's journey. 2. *His inward cogitations.* The current of his thoughts needs not be difficult to imagine. Mingling with the sadness of leaving home, and the apprehension with which he regarded the uncertain future, there could not fail to be a sense of security, if not a gleam of hope, arising from the consciousness that he carried with him his father's blessing; in this again affording a reflex of most men's lives, in which joy and sorrow, hope and fear, continually meet and strangely blend. 3. *His heavenly visitation.* If the dream by which Jacob's slumber was disturbed was occasioned by unusual cerebral excitement, if its psychological framework was supplied by the peculiar colour of his meditations, it is still true that it was made the medium of a Divine theophany and revelation. So God, who is "never far from any one of us," is specially near to his children in solitude and sorrow, "in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, opening the ears of men, and sealing their instruction" (Job xxxiii. 15, 16).

II. THE MIDNIGHT DREAM. 1. *The celestial vision.* (1) A ladder reaching from earth to heaven; suggesting the thought of an open pathway of communication between God and man, and in particular between the heirs of the promise and their covenant God. (2) The angels of God ascending and descending upon it; symbolising God's providential government of the world by means of the celestial hosts (Ps. ciii. 20, 21; civ. 4), but especially the ministry of angels towards the heirs of salvation (Ps. xci. 11; Heb. i. 14). A truth henceforward to be exemplified in the experience of Jacob, and afterwards more fully, indeed completely and ideally, realised in Christ. (3) Jehovah standing above it. The situation occupied by the symbolic presence of Jehovah was designed to indicate two things: first, that Jehovah was the true and only source whence blessing could descend to man; and, second, that the pathway which had been opened up for sinful man conducted straight into God's immediate presence. Thus it was a visible unveiling of the grace and glory comprehended in the covenant, and now fully revealed by the gospel. 2. *The accompanying voice.* (1) Proclaiming the Divine name, as the covenant God of Abraham and of Isaac, of which the New Testament interpretation is the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the true seed of Abraham. (2) Renewing the covenant promises—of a land, of a seed, of a blessing. (3) Personally engaging to extend to Jacob continual attendance,—"Behold, I am with thee,"—constant protection,—"and will keep thee in all thy goings,"—complete fidelity,—"I will not leave thee," &c.; in all which again the voice was but an anticipatory echo of the heavenly voice that sounds in the gospel.

III. THE AWE-STRUCK AWAKENING. 1. *Devout impression.* The night having passed in contemplation of the unseen world, the morning found the startled sleeper with a strong sense of the supernatural upon his soul, which filled him with alarm. Even to God's reconciled children awe-inspiring (cf. Job xlii. 6; Isa. vi. 5; Luke v. 8; Rev. i. 17), a vivid realisation of the Divine presence is to the sinful heart overwhelmingly terrible. 2. *Reverent adoration.* "This is none other but the house of God"—implying ideas of Divine residence,—"Surely the Lord is in this place!"—Divine provision,—the thoughts of "bread to eat and raiment to put on" appear to have been suggested to Jacob's mind,—and Divine communion—Jacob realises as never before the conception of personal intercourse between Jehovah and his people;—"and the gate of heaven"—in which lie embedded the fundamental notions of nearness, vision, entrance. 3. *Grateful commemoration.* (1) He sets up the stone slab on which his head had rested as a visible memorial of the sublime transaction

which had there occurred, and in token of his gratitude pours the only gift he carried with him on it, viz., oil. Sincere piety demands that God's merciful visitations should be remembered and thankfully acknowledged by offerings of the choicest and best of our possessions. (2) He calls the name of the place Bethel: in the mean time with a view to his own comfort and satisfaction, but also, there is little doubt, with an eye to the instruction and encouragement of his descendants. It is dutiful in saints not only to rejoice their own hearts by the recollection of Divine mercies, but also to take measures for transmitting the knowledge of them to future generations.

IV. THE SOLEMN VOW. 1. *Faith's expectation.* In a spirit not of mercenary stipulation, but of believing anticipation, Jacob expresses confidence in henceforth enjoying (1) Divine companionship—"If," or since, "God will be with me;" (2) Divine protection—"and will keep me in this way that I go;" (3) Divine sustenance—"and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on;" (4) Divine favour—"so that I come again to my father's house in peace;" and (5) Divine salvation—"then," or rather, and since, "Jehovah shall be my God;"—five things promised to the poorest and most desolate of heaven's pilgrims. 2. *Faith's resolution.* Confidently anticipating the fulfilment of God's promises, Jacob resolves—(1) To erect an altar at Bethel on returning to the Holy Land, a vow which he afterwards fulfilled. Whatever vows God's people make should be paid, and no vows are more agreeable to God's will than those which have for their objects the cultivation of personal piety and the perpetuation and spread of his religion among men. (2) To consecrate the tenth part of his increase to God, *i. e.* to the maintenance of God's worship—an example of pious liberality which has seldom been approached by Christ's followers, though, considering their higher privileges and obligations, it ought to have been frequently surpassed.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 10—22.—*Jacob's dream.* Where revelations had been vouchsafed it was supposed that they would be repeated. The stony pillow on which the weary head rested may be changed by the visitation of Divine grace into the meeting-place of heaven and earth. The morning beams breaking in upon the shadowy refuge of the night are transfigured into a dream of covenant blessing. The ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reached to heaven. Angels of God on the way of mediation, ascending, descending, carrying up the wants and services of the man of God, bringing down the messages of consolation, the vouchsafements of help and deliverance. "Behold, the Lord stood above it," as the source of all the blessing, standing ready to work for his chosen. This is the first direct communication of Jehovah to Jacob, the first in a long line of revelations of which he was the recipient. It is a renewal of the covenant made to his fathers, it is a republication of the promises. But we require to hear the Lord say to us, "I am with *thee*, I will not leave thee," especially when we are already on the journey of faith, when we are obeying the commandment of God, and of the father and mother speaking in his name. Such a place as Jacob found may be made known to us—

I. IN PROVIDENTIAL INTERPOSITIONS. We journey on through the wilderness and light upon a certain place where we think we are only among stony facts, where we can find but a harsh welcome; but the Lord is in the place, though we know it not till he reveals himself. Then we cry with trembling gratitude, This is the house of God, &c.

II. IN SEASONS OF RELIGIOUS OPPORTUNITY. The ordinary and customary is lifted up by special gift of the Spirit into the opened heaven, the visiting angels, the vision of the throne of God. "The house of God, the gate of heaven." Such may be the awaking of our soul in the sanctuary of our own private devotions or of our public worship.

III. Jacob is A TYPE OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE REGARDED AS A WHOLE. The Church has often laid itself down upon the stones and slept with weariness in its passage through the desert, and the Lord has revealed the ladder of his covenant, connecting

together that very place and time of hardship with the throne of grace and glory, and the ascending and descending angels.

IV. Jesus himself employed this dream of the patriarch as A TYPICAL PROPHECY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. "Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," the true Jacob, the Prince prevailing with God and with men (John i. 51). The cross is the ladder of mediation. It was set up on the earth. It was not of earthly origin as a means of atonement, but its foot was on the earth as it came forth out of the method and course of earthly history in connection with Divine counsels. Its top reached to heaven, for it was a Divine Mediator whose sacrifice was offered upon it. Angels of God ascended and descended upon the ladder, for only through the atoning merit of Christ is angelic ministration maintained. It is for them "who shall be heirs of salvation." At the summit of the cross, representing the whole mediatorial work of Christ, is the Lord standing, speaking his word of covenant, and stretching forth his right hand on behalf of his people. Resting at the foot of the cross we hear the voice of a faithful Guide, saying, "I will not leave thee," &c. In every place one who is conscious of surrounding covenant mercy can say, "This is none other but the house of God," &c.—R.

Ver. 12.—*A stairway to heaven.* "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." Jacob in fear of his life leaves home. The last kiss of his mother is taken. During the day Jacob goes forward cheerfully. Night comes on at length. The path is no longer distinct. The wind moans sadly. A sense of loneliness creeps over him. Fear of Esau haunts him. He sees the figure of his brother behind this shrub and that rock. Had Esau outrun to murder him in that lonely spot? He trembles at every shadow, and shudders at every sound. He thinks of the God of his father and mother, and prays. He lies down in the desert; a furze-bush is his only shelter, and a stone his hard pillow. He looks up into the dark vault all glittering with the silent stars. More intense becomes his loneliness, for the stars have no voice for him. Plotting and far-seeing Jacob had deep home-longings, mystic inquirings, and a wealth of affection in his nature. Of such God can make something; to such God can reveal something. To idolatrous, carnal Esaus how little can God make known. Selfishness hinders. Here in the desert Jacob draws his camel-hair robe more tightly over his feet, and dreams of parents and home, and heaven and God. It might surprise us that he could have such sweet dreams when he was fleeing from the one whom he had undoubtedly wronged. God would over-rule the wrong, and therefore sent him this vision.

I. ALL HAVE DREAMS OF A HEAVEN. A heaven is that for which all men are seeking, whether sought in the way of business, or pleasure, or politics, or literature. Even sceptics have their heaven in their doubt and intellectual pride. That which is our highest object is our heaven. As water cannot rise above its level, so the heaven of some cannot be above their thoughts. There will be a future state answering to the highest longings of the believer, a place of existence in glory far beyond anything here.

II. ACTUAL COMMUNICATION WITH HEAVEN IS POSSIBLE. One author (Hazlitt) says, "In the days of Jacob there was a ladder between heaven and earth, but now the heavens are gone further and become astronomical." True science opens up an infinite number of worlds and densely-peopled spaces. Material discoveries lessen the sense of spiritual realities. It need not be so. If the universe is great, how great also is the soul, which can embrace in its thoughts the universe! And it is in the soul that God can and does reveal heaven. Peace, hope, love is the spirit of heaven, and that is revealed by Christ. Purify the spirit and heaven comes near.

III. EARNEST EFFORT IS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION WITH HEAVEN. In the dream of Jacob he saw a picture of his own struggling ascent in life. Angels might flit up and down, but man had to *struggle* and put forth earnest effort to maintain the union. Early in life the ascent seems easy. A mountain never appears so far to its summit as it is in reality. As we go on we become more conscious of the difficulties in the way of maintaining the open communications. Often we find ourselves with heads between our hands, pondering whether we shall ever overcome the evil and attain to the good.

IV. THERE IS ALWAYS HELP FROM THE HEAVENS IN THE EFFORT TO MAINTAIN THE COMMUNICATION. A voice comes to Jacob. A promise of guidance and support was given. Christ in his conversation with Nathaniel shows us how all good comes through him. In Christ all goodness centres. All heaven rays out from him in the pardon and reconciliation he has brought. He is the Word made flesh. He is the Divine voice from above. Through him the Holy Spirit is given, and that Holy Spirit shows us things to come, makes heaven plain, and the way direct. One day we shall be called to follow the way the angels go, and after death shall ascend that stairway which "slopes through darkness up to God."—H.

Ver. 15.—*God's providential care.* "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." Among things believed, but not sufficiently realised, is the truth of God's constant overruling care. We can trace cause and effect a little way, then lose the chain, and feel as if it went no further, as if events had no special cause. This a common evil in the life of Christians. Its root, walking by sight more than by faith. Jacob—what made him try craft? Did not trust God fully. Had no habit of faith. But God had not forgotten him. And as he slept on the stone at Bethel the reality of God's presence was made known to him (Isa. xliii. 2; Matt. xxviii. 20) and recorded for our learning.

I. GOD DOES ALWAYS WATCH OVER AND GUIDE. The ladder was not a new thing; it had existed always. The vision showed what exists everywhere (2 Kings vi. 17). The ladder shows the truth which should stamp our lives. God is love, and love means care. This is for all. Not our love that causes it. Our love, trust, life spring from that truth. The living God is close to us. His hand touches our life at every point. How is it that we are unconscious of this?

II. GOD'S WORKING IS HIDDEN AND SILENT. Jacob was startled to find him near. Because year by year the world goes on as before, unbelievers deny God's active presence, worldly men think not of it, and even godly men sometimes forget; for we cannot see the top of the ladder. But God, there, directs all.

III. HIS PURPOSES ARE ACCOMPLISHED BY MANY AGENTS. Many angels, messengers (Ps. civ. 4; Heb. i. 14); natural agents, the elements, &c.; human agents, men good and bad alike carrying out his will; spiritual beings (Ps. xci. 11). How often those who pray for spiritual blessings forget that common things also are ruled by God. Thus a great door of communion is closed.

IV. BUT THERE IS SO MUCH CONFUSION IN THE WORLD. We often cannot trace God's hand. How often is trust confounded, wise schemes frustrated, earnest self-denial in vain; prayers, real and intense, without apparent answer. Nay, these are but seeming confusions, to teach the lesson of faith. Through all these, by all these, God's purposes are surely carried out. One great truth is the key of all—the love of God revealed in Christ. This is the ladder from which he proclaims, "Lo, I am with thee" (cf. Rom. viii. 32). He who wrought out redemption, can he fail?

V. GOD'S GOVERNANCE IS FOR OUR SALVATION, in the fullest sense of the word, giving us the victory over evil. God was with Jacob. He had been from the first, though not recognised. He was so to the end. Not giving uninterrupted prosperity. Many a fault and many a painful page in his history; but through all these he was led on. The word to each who will receive it—"Behold, I am with thee." Not because of thy faith, still less of thy goodness. Oh that every Christian would practise trust (Ps. v. 3); hearing our Father's voice, "Commit thy way unto the Lord," and gladly believing "the Lord is my Shepherd."—M.

Vers. 18—22.—*The grateful retrospect and the consecrated prospect.* I. THE TRUE LIFE is that which starts from the place of fellowship with God and commits the future to him. We can always find a pillar of blessed memorial and consecration. *The Bethel.* 1. Providential care. 2. Religious privilege. 3. Special communications of the Spirit. God with us as a fact. Our pilgrimage a Bethel all through.

II. THE TRUE TESTIMONY that which erects a stone of witness, *a Bethel*, where others can find God. 1. *Personal.* The pillow of rest the pillar of praise. 2. *Practical.* The testimony which speaks of the journey and the traveller.

III. THE TRUE COVENANT. 1. Coming out of fellowship. 2. Pledging the future

at the house of God, and in sight of Divine revelation. 3. Blessed exchange of gifts, confirmation of love. Jehovah keeping and guiding and feeding; his servant serving him and giving him a tenth of all he received. The patriarch's vow was the result of a distinct advance in his religious life. The hope of blessing became the covenant of engagement, service, worship, sacrifice. The highest form of religious life is that which rests on a solemn vow of grateful dedication at Bethel. The end before us is '*our Father's house in peace.*"—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ver. 1.—**Then Jacob went on his journey** (literally, *lifted up his feet*—a graphic description of travelling. Inspired by new hopes, and conscious of loftier aims than when he fled from Beersheba, the lonely fugitive departed from Bethel), **and came into the land of the people of the east**—literally, *the land of the sons of the east*, i. e. Mesopotamia, about 450 miles distant from Beersheba.

Ver. 2.—**And he looked** (either to discover where he was, or in search of water), **and behold a well in the field,**—not the well at which Eliezer's caravan halted, which was a well for the village maidens, situated in front of the town, and approached by steps (*vide* ch. xxiv.), but a well in the open field for the use of flocks, and covered at the time of Jacob's arrival with a huge stone—**and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it.** A frequent Oriental scene (cf. ch. xxiv. 11; Exod. ii. 16). "Who that has travelled much in this country has not often arrived at a well in the heat of the day which was surrounded with numerous flocks of sheep waiting to be watered? I once saw such a scene in the burning plains of Northern Syria. Half-naked, fierce-looking men were drawing up water in leather buckets; flock after flock was brought up, watered, and sent away; and after all the men had ended their work, then several women and girls brought up their flocks, and drew water for them. Thus it was with Jethro's daughters; and thus, no doubt, it would have been with Rachel if Jacob had not rolled away the stone and watered her sheep" ('Land and Book,' p. 589). **For out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.** "Most of the cisterns are covered with a large thick, flat stone, in the centre of which a hole is cut, which forms the mouth of the cistern. This hole, in many instances, we found covered with a heavy stone, to the removal of which two or three men were requisite" (Robinson, ii. p. 180).

Ver. 3.—**And thither were all the flocks gathered.** "Fifteen minutes later we came to a large well in a valley among the swells, fitted up with troughs and reservoirs, with flocks waiting around" (Robinson, iii. p. 21). **And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.** From the middle of ver. 2 the words are parenthetical, the watering of the flocks not having taken place till Rachel had arrived (ver. 9) and Jacob had uncovered the well (ver. 10).

Ver. 4.—**And Jacob said unto them** (the shepherds of the three flocks), **My brethren** (a friendly salutation from one who was himself a shepherd), **whence be ye?** Anticipating that their reply would reveal his whereabouts. **And they said, Of Haran are we.** This could scarcely fail to remind Jacob of God's promise to guide him in his journey.

Ver. 5.—**And he said unto them** (with the view of discovering his kinsmen), **Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?**—*i. e.* the grandson, Laban's father having been Bethuel, who, however, here, as in ch. xxiv., retires into the background. **And they said, We know him.** The language of the shepherds being Chaldæan (*vide* ch. xxxi. 47), Jacob, who spoke Hebrew, was able to converse with them either because he had learnt Chaldee from his mother (Clericus), or, as is more probable, because the dialects were not then greatly dissimilar (Gosman in Lange).

Ver. 6.—**And he said unto them, Is he well?** Literally, *is there peace to him?* meaning not simply bodily health, but all manner of felicity; ὑγιαίνει (LXX.); *sanusne est?* (Vulgate). Cf. the Christian salutation, *Pax vobiscum.* **And they said, He is well** (literally, *peace*): **and, behold, Rachel**—"Ewe" (Gesenius)—**his daughter cometh with the sheep.**

Ver. 7.—**And he said, Lo, it is yet high day** (literally, *the day is yet great*, i. e. much of it still remains), **neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together** (*i. e.* to shut them up for the night): **water ye the sheep, and go and feed them**—being desirous to get the shepherds away from the well that he might meet Rachel alone (Keil, Lange, Murphy), though perhaps his words with as much correctness may be traced to that prudent and industrious habit of mind which afterwards shone forth so conspicuously in himself, and which instinctively caused

him to frown upon laziness and inactivity (Starke, Kalisch, Bush).

Ver. 8.—**And they said, We cannot,**—not because of any physical difficulty (Kalisch), since three men could easily have accomplished what Jacob by himself did, but because they had agreed not to do so (Rosenmüller, Murphy), but to wait—**until all the flocks be gathered together** (when the watering was done at once, instead of at so many different times), **and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth**;—more correctly rendered, *and* (*sc.* then, *i. e.* when the flocks are assembled) *they* (i. e. the shepherds) *roll away the stone* —**then** (or, and) **we water the sheep.** The object of watering the flocks collectively may have been, as above stated, for convenience, or to prevent the well from being opened too frequently, in which case dust might rapidly accumulate within it (Kalisch), or perhaps to secure an equal distribution of the water (Murphy).

Ver. 9—**And while he yet spake with them** (literally, *he yet speaking with them*), **Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them**—or, *she* was *a* shepherdess, the part. רֹעָה being used as a substantive (Gesenius, 'Lex.,' sub. nom.).

Ver. 10.—**And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother,**—"the term mother's brother is not unintentionally repeated three times in this verse to describe with the greatest possible stress that Jacob had met with his own relations, with "his bone and his flesh" (Kalisch)—**and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother** (Jacob from the first takes particular notice of Laban's flock, perhaps regarding them as a sign of Laban's wealth. If Laban's daughter had her attractions for the son of Isaac, so also had Laban's sheep), **that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth** (probably disregarding the shepherds' rule to wait for the gathering of all the flocks, unless, indeed, Rachel's was the last), **and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.** The threefold repetition of this phrase does not prove that Jacob acted in all this purely as a cousin (Lange). The phrase is the historian's, and Jacob had not yet informed Rachel of his name.

Ver. 11.—**And Jacob kissed Rachel,**—in demonstration of his cousinly affection. If Jacob had not yet discovered who he was to the fair shepherdess, his behaviour must have filled her with surprise, even allowing for the unaffected simplicity of the times; but the fact that she does not resent his conduct as an undue liberty perhaps suggests that he had first informed her of his relationship to the inmates of Laban's house (Calvin). On kissing *vide* ch. xxvii. 26—**and lifted up his voice, and wept**—partly for joy at finding his relatives (cf. ch. xliii. 30; xlv. 2, 14, 15); partly in grateful acknowledgment of God's kindness in conducting him to his mother's brother's house.

Ver. 12.—**And Jacob told** (or, had told, *ut supra*) **Rachel that he was her father's brother,**—as Lot is called Abraham's brother, though in reality his nephew (ch. xiii. 8; xiv. 14, 16)—**and that he was Rebekah's son** (this clause would explain the meaning of the term "brother" in the former): **and she ran and told her father.** Like Rebekah, believing the stranger's words and running to report them, though, unlike Rebekah, first relating them to her father (cf. ch. xxiv. 28).

Ver. 13.—**And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings** (literally, *heard the hearing*, or *thing heard*, i. e. the report of the arrival) **of Jacob his sister's son,**—he acted very much as he did ninety-seven years before, when Abraham's servant came to woo his sister (ch. xxiv. 20, 30)—**that** (literally, *and*) **he ran to meet him, and embraced him,** —so afterwards Esau did Jacob (ch. xxxiii. 4), and Jacob the two sons of Joseph (ch. xlviii. 10)—**and kissed him, and brought him to his house**—thus evincing the same kindness and hospitality that had characterised him on the previous occasion. **And he** (Jacob) **told Laban all these things**—what his mother had instructed him to say to attest his kinship (Calvin); the things related in the immediate context (Keil); more likely the entire story of his life, and in particular of his exile from home, with its cause and object (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Lange).

Ver. 14.—**And Laban said unto him** (giving utterance to the impression Jacob's recital had produced upon his mind), **Surely thou art my bone and my flesh**—*i. e.* my blood relation (cf. Judges ix. 2; 2 Sam. v. 1). Laban meant that Jacob had satisfactorily proved himself Rebekah's son. **And he abode with him the space of a month**—literally, *a month of days* (cf. ch. xli. 1; Numb. xi. 20), or a month as regards time, "the second substantive describing the general notion of which the first is a specification" (Kalisch).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*Jacob at the well of Haran: a romantic adventure.* I. JACOB'S MEETING WITH THE SHEPHERDS. 1. *The providential discovery.* The well in the field with the three flocks of sheep lying by it enabled Jacob to ascertain his whereabouts, and ultimately led to his finding Rachel. God guides the steps of his

people without interfering with the ordinary course of nature, simply directing them in the exercise of sense and intelligence; and doubtless Jacob recognised in his lighting on the Haran well a first instalment of that celestial guidance he had been lately promised. Saints should practise the art of discerning the movement of God's finger in the minutest and commonest events of life. 2. *The friendly conversation.* Saluting the shepherds as his brethren, *i. e.* as masters of a common craft, Jacob gathers from their frank communications that he was on the outskirts of Haran, in which his uncle Laban was a prosperous and wealthy citizen, and that his cousin Rachel was on the road to that very well beside which he stood with a flock of her father's sheep. Great is the virtue of asking questions, especially when they are prefaced with politeness. Seldom anything is lost, but frequently much is gained, by courteous inquiries. 3. *The prudent counsel.* Observing his friends disposed to indolence, and perhaps desirous of meeting Rachel alone, Jacob recommends them to uncover the well, water their flocks, and drive them off again to pasture, since much of the day yet remained. If it was their advantage he sought, his advice was good; if it was his own interest he served, the stratagem was ingenious. God's people should be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves.

II. JACOB'S FIRST SIGHT OF RACHEL. 1. *The gallant action.* The lovely shepherdess arriving made a deep impression on her cousin's heart. Springing to his feet, he rolls the stone from the well's mouth, fills the troughs, and waters Laban's sheep—impelled thereto, shall we say, as much by consideration for the fair girl who attended them as for the rich flock-master who possessed them. Kindly acts proceeding from loving hearts are sometimes largely assisted by the attractions of their recipients. 2. *The loving salutation.* "And Jacob kissed Rachel." If before explaining who he was, it must have taken her by surprise even in those unconventional times; but it is probable he may have first announced his name, in which case his behaviour was only in accordance with the manners of the age. Suitable expressions of affection to friends beseem both grace and nature. 3. *The irrepressible emotion.* "And Jacob lifted up his voice and wept"—expressive both of joy at finding his relatives, and of gratitude for God's goodness in guiding him to the house of his mother's brother. Unexpected good and eminent providences kindle transports of delight in gracious souls. 4. *The important communication.* "Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father." Friends, and much more Christians, meeting on life's journey, should with frankness discover themselves to each other, and give each other hearty welcome.

III. JACOB'S INTRODUCTION TO LABAN. 1. *The uncle's reception of his nephew,* "Laban ran to meet his sister's son, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house." Kinship and kindness should ever be allied. Laban's hospitality to Jacob was grounded on the fact of their relationship. So is Christ's entertainment of his people based upon the circumstance that they are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." 2. *The nephew's return to his uncle.* Ingenuous confidence—"Jacob told Laban all these things"—and faithful service. It is implied in ver. 15 that during the month Jacob abode with Laban he served in keeping Laban's sheep. God's people should endeavour as far as in them lies to requite the kindnesses of relatives and friends.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxix.—*Jacob among his mother's kindred.* Taught by experience to be patient. His own craft reflected in Laban. Lessons to be learned.

I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TEACHING OF GOD IN THE INNER MAN AND HIS LEADINGS IN PROVIDENCE. Jacob learned what he needed to learn—dependence, self-humiliation. Saw the evil of selfishness; understood that the Divine purposes must not be identified in our thought with our personal feelings and desires. We must wait on God to know what his will is.

II. THE INDEPENDENCE OF GOD'S GRACE. The chosen instruments not chosen for their own sake. Often that which displeases us is our special help. Leah, not chosen by Jacob, bore him sons. Rachel, whom he loved, was barren. Even in such mixed

soil as these characters the seed of Divine life will grow. Leah gave names to her children which betokened an increasing faith. Jacob's willingness to serve was a gracious victory over self, preparing him for higher things. Thwarted man is taught to wait upon God.

III. Practical lessons on the relations of the sexes and married life, &c. The misery of all that interferes with the sanctity of affection and its supremacy. The certainty that lack of candour and truthfulness will be fruitful in evil results. The importance of right feeling in sustaining religious character; how difficult, where the relationship is not founded on affection, to maintain truth, purity, and a lofty standard of life. We must try to see disappointments from a higher point of view. God may withhold what we desire, but only to give afterwards a fuller blessing.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 15.—**And Laban said unto Jacob** (probably at the month's end), **Because thou** art—literally, *is it not that thou art* (cf. ch. xxvii. 36; 2 Sam. xxiii. 19)—**my brother,** —my kinsman (*vide* on ver. 12)—**shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought?** (literally, *and thou servest me gratuitously*) **tell me, what** shall **thy wages** be? A proof of Laban's generosity and justice (Kalisch); of his selfishness and greed (Keil); of his prudence and sagacity in opening up the way for a love-suit (Lange).

Ver. 16.—**And Laban had two daughters** (the wife of Laban is not mentioned in the story): **the name of the elder** was **Leah,**— "Wearied" (Gesenius); "Dull," "Stupid" (Fürst); "Pining," "Yearning" (Lange)— **and the name of the younger** was **Rachel** —"Ewe" (Gesenius).

Ver. 17.—**Leah was tender eyed.** Literally, *the eyes of Leah were tender*, i. e. weak, dull; ἀσθενεῖς (LXX.), *lippi* (Vulgate); cf. 1 Sam. xvi. 12. Leah's face was not ugly (Bohlen), only her eyes were not clear and lustrous, dark and sparkling, as in all probability Rachel's were (Knobel). **But Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.** Literally, *beautiful in form* (i. e. in outline and make of body; cf. ch. xxxix. 6; also 1 Sam. xvi. 18—"a man of form," *i. e. formosus*, well made) *and beautiful in appearance* (i. e. of a lovely countenance). "If authentic history was not in the way, Leah, as the mother of Judah, and of the Davidic Messianic line, ought to have carried off the prize of beauty after Sarah and Rebekah" (Lange).

Ver. 18.—**And Jacob loved Rachel** (it is more than probable that this was an illustration of what is known as "love at first sight" on the part of Rachel as well as Jacob); **and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.** Having no property with which to buy his wife, according to Oriental custom (Kalisch), or to give the usual dowry for her to her father (Keil),—cf. ch. xxiv. 53; xxxiv. 12; 1 Sam. xviii. 25,—Jacob's offer was at once accepted by his grasping uncle, though he was that uncle's "brother" (ver. 15).

Ver. 19.—**And Laban said,** It is **better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man.** Orientals commonly prefer alliances within the circle of their own relatives. Burckhardt, Volney, Layard, and Lane testify that this is still the case among the Bedouins, the Druses, and other Eastern tribes. **Abide with me**— a formal ratification of the compact on the part of Laban.

Ver. 20.—**And Jacob served**—hard service (ch. xxxi. 40, 41), in keeping sheep (Hosea xii. 12)—**seven years for Rachel.** The purity and intensity of Jacob's affection was declared not alone by the proposal of a seven years' term of servitude,—a long period of waiting for a man of fifty-seven, if not seventy-seven, years of age,—but also by the spirit in which he served his avaricious relative. Many as the days were that required to intervene before he obtained possession of his bride, they were rendered happy by the sweet society of Rachel. **And they seemed unto him** but **a few days, for the love he had to her.** "Words breathing the purest tenderness, and expressing more emphatically than the flowery hyperboles of romantic phraseology the deep attachment of an affectionate heart" (Kalisch); words too which show the lofty appreciation Jacob had of the personal worth of his future bride.

Ver. 21.—**And Jacob said unto Laban** (who, though the term of servitude had expired, appeared to be in no haste to implement his part of the bargain), **Give me my wife** (*i. e.* my affianced wife, as in Deut. xxii. 23, 24; Matt. i. 20), **for my days are fulfilled** (*i. e.* my term of service is completed), **that I may go in unto her**—*quo significat intactam adhuc esse virginem* (Calvin); a proof that Jacob's love was pure and true.

Ver. 22.—**And Laban** (unable to evade or delay the fulfilment of his agreement with Jacob) **gathered together all the men of the**

place (not the entire population, but the principal inhabitants), **and made a feast**—a "mishteh," or drinking (cf. ch. xix. 3), *i. e.* a wedding banquet (cf. bride-ale = bridal), which commonly lasted seven days (Judges xiv. 10; Tobit xi. 18), though it appears to have varied according to the circumstances of the bridegroom.

Ver. 23.—**And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him.** The deception practised on Jacob was rendered possible by the fact that the bride was usually conducted into the marriage chamber veiled; the veil being so long and close as to conceal not only the face, but much of the person (*vide* ch. xxiv. 65). **And he went in unto her.** The conduct of Laban is perfectly intelligible as the outcome of his sordid avarice; but it is difficult to understand how Leah could acquiesce in a proposal so base as to wrong her sister by marrying one who neither sought nor loved her. She must herself have been attached to Jacob; and it is probable that Laban had explained to her his plan for bringing about a double wedding.

Ver. 24.—**And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah**—"the Dropping"? (Gesenius), "Myrrh-juice" (Fürst)—**his maid** (according to Gesenius the word is closely connected with an unused root signifying to spread out, hence a maid-servant) for **an handmaid.** This was in accordance with Oriental custom (*vide* ch. xxiv. 61). That Leah obtained only one damsel need not be ascribed to Laban's parsimonious character, but to his already-formed intention to bestow a second on Rachel.

Ver. 25.—**And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah.** If Jacob's deception, even with the veiled bride, may still be difficult to understand, it is easy to perceive in Leah's substitution for Rachel a clear instance of Divine retribution for the imposition he had practised on his father. So the Lord oftentimes rewards evil-doers *according* to their wickedness (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 10—12). **And he said to Laban** (who, Calvin conjectures, had given Jacob a splendid entertainment the night before to make him say nothing about the fraud), **What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?** It says much for Jacob that he did not seek to repudiate the marriage. Perhaps he saw the hand of God in what had happened, and probably considered that, though he had chosen Rachel, God had selected Leah as his wife. If so, it must be set to Jacob's credit that at the call of God, thus providentially addressed to him, he was prepared to sacrifice his best affections to the claims of religion and duty. It is not Jacob, but Laban, who proposes that he should also marry Rachel.

Ver. 26.—**And Laban said, It must not be so done**—the future expresses the thought that the custom has grown into a strong moral obligation (Kalisch)—**in our country** (Hebrew, *place*), **to give the younger before the firstborn.** The same custom exists among the Indians (Rosenmüller; cf. Roberts, 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 34), Egyptians (Lane), and other Oriental countries (Delitzsch).

Ver. 27.—**Fulfil her week,**—literally, *make full the week of this one*, i. e. of Leah, if Leah was given to Jacob on the first night of the festivities (Calmet, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Ainsworth); but if Leah was married at the close of the seven days, then it must refer to Rachel's week (Bush, Murphy)—**and we** (including Laban's wife and eldest son, as in ch. xxiv. 50, 55) **will give thee this also** (*i. e.* Rachel) **for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.** Almost every motive that is mean, base, and despicable appears in this behaviour of Laban's; if he attached little value to his daughters' affections, he had a keen appreciation of Jacob's qualities as a shepherd.

Ver. 28.—**And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week.** Literally, *the week of this one*, either of Leah or of Rachel, as above. Rosenmüller, assigning the first week (ver. 27) to Leah, refers this to Rachel; but the expression can scarcely have two different meanings within the compass of two verses. **And he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.** The polygamy of Jacob, though contrary to the law of nature (ch. ii. 21—25), admits of some palliation, since Rachel was the choice of his affections. The marriage of sisters was afterwards declared incestuous (Levit. xviii. 18).

Ver. 29.—**And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah**—"Bashful," "Modest" (Gesenius)—**his handmaid to be her maid.**

Ver. 30.—**And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah** (implying, however, that Leah had a place in his affections), **and served with him yet seven other years.** The seven years cunningly exacted for Leah was thus the second fraud practised upon Jacob (ch. **xxx. 26; xxxi. 41;** Hosea xii. 12).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 15—30.—*Jacob and Laban, or the deceiver deceived.* I. JACOB'S CONTRACT WITH LABAN. 1. *The promised service*—seven years of pastoral assistance. (1) Freely offered. "I will serve thee seven years." Contracts are legally and morally invalid where freedom in the promiser does not exist. (2) Faithfully rendered. Jacob "served seven years," as he had stipulated. Voluntary engagements should be deemed sacred. (3) Readily accepted. Laban both appreciated Jacob's merits as a shepherd and regarded Jacob's terms as easy. If Laban's words in closing with Jacob's offer did not indicate his guile, they were at least evidence of his greed. (4) Harshly exacted. Jacob testifies as much on leaving Laban. Covetous souls do not shrink from making hard bargains even with relatives and friends. 2. *The stipulated wages*—Rachel in marriage as a wife. This part of the contract was—(1) Eagerly desired by Jacob. "Jacob loved Rachel," who was beautiful both in face and form. It is not sinful either to appreciate or desire personal symmetry and grace in those to whom we yield our affections. Female loveliness, though it may enkindle love, need not render the heart that loves less pure. (2) Patiently waited for by Jacob. This was a testimony to the purity, tenderness, and strength of Jacob's affection. Besides transforming seven years into a few days, and making pleasant and lightsome labour of what would otherwise have been galling bondage, it enabled him to wait God's time for receiving his bride. (3) Cheerfully assented to by Laban. "It is better that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man." Yet—(4) Guilefully withheld by Laban. Avaricious men seldom scruple at deceiving others for the sake of profit. Greed of gain is commonly accompanied by guile of men.

II. LABAN'S DECEPTION OF JACOB. 1. *The just request.* "Give me my wife." "The labourer is worthy of his hire," and the servant is entitled to his wages. 2. *The marriage festival.* "Laban made a feast." Seemingly assenting to his nephew's request, the crafty uncle prepares a wedding banquet. Feasting and rejoicing are both becoming and allowable in connection with marriage celebrations. 3. *The substituted bride.* Either at the end of the first day or at the close of the festivities, "Laban took Leah and brought her," veiled and in silence, to the bridal chamber. For the wickedness of Laban in breaking his promise, defrauding his nephew, wronging his younger daughter, and practically prostituting his elder, excuse is impossible; for Leah's acquiescence in her father's plot explanation, though not apology, may be found in her manifest love for Jacob, and perhaps in her belief that Laban had secured Jacob's consent to the arrangement. The man who could sell one daughter's affections and sacrifice another's would not stick at deceiving both, if he could. 4. *The discovered fraud.* "In the morning, behold, it was Leah." The day manifests what the night hides—the sins of men; and the light of the great day will disclose what the darkness of time conceals. 5. *The lame excuse.* Interrogated by Jacob, Laban offers in extenuation of his heartless deception that popular custom demanded the marriage of an elder sister before a younger. So public opinion, prevailing habit, universal practice, are often pled in apology for offences against the law of God. But the conventional maxims of society are of no weight when set against Divine commandments. 6. *The righteous retribution.* Though indefensible on the part of Laban, the substitution of Leah for Rachel was a deserved punishment of Jacob. Having wronged Esau his brother, he is in turn wronged by "a brother"—Laban. Having substituted the younger (himself) for the older (Esau), he is recompensed by having the older put into the place of the younger. As Isaac knew not when he blessed Jacob, so Jacob knows not when he marries Leah. As Jacob acted at the instigation of his mother, Leah yields to the suggestion of her father. 7. *The amicable settlement.* Jacob celebrates the week of festival for Leah, and then receives Rachel as a wife, engaging to serve another term of seven years for her who had lightened the labour of the previous seven. If Jacob's conduct evinced sincere attachment to Rachel and peaceful disposition towards Laban, it displayed doubtful regard for the law of God.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 20.—*The power of true affection.* "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel," &c. I. THE INWARD SPRING OF THE OUTWARD LIFE. Power of the heart over the will, over the circumstances, over flesh. Time measured by the motions of our thought. The world needs to be taught that the material rests on the immaterial.

II. THE SERVICE OF LOVE THE CONSECRATION AND CONSUMMATION OF HUMAN ENERGY. Christ the highest object of affection. The life of his servant compared with the life of selfish caprice.

III. THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF LOVE SUGGESTED. Jacob a type of Christ; Rachel, of his Church. He served for her. His love made obedience, even unto death, his delight.

IV. SPECIAL TRIAL HAS ITS SPECIAL REWARD. Jacob served doubly for Rachel; but his service was amply paid afterwards, although for a time the veil of disappointment hid the purpose of God. While Leah, as the mother of Judah, was the true ancestress of Messiah, still it was in Joseph, the son of Rachel, that Jacob's heart was satisfied, and that the history of the kingdom of God was most manifestly carried on and its glory set forth. As in the case of Sarah and Rebekah, so in that of Rachel, the birth of the representative seed is connected with special bestowments of grace.—R.

Ver. 20.—*Christ's love for the Church.* "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel." On the surface this is a step in Jacob's training, in the fulfilment of God's promise at Bethel. It shows a new feature in his character. We see not the man of cunning devices, but one full of pure, self-sacrificing love. Fourteen years of service willingly given to purchase, according to Eastern custom, his bride. But Jacob's love suggests the deeper and purer love of Christ for the Church. Rachel a type of the Bride; a shepherdess and "fairest among women" (Cant. i. 7, 8); sharer of the sufferings of the Church (Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. ii. 18; Rev. xii. 17). For the Church's sake (Ephes. v. 25) Christ "served" (Phil. ii. 7); became a Shepherd (John x. 11); with his service and life-blood, "obedient unto death," he purchased her (Acts xx. 28), to unite her to himself for ever.

I. THE LORD "SERVED" BECAUSE HE LOVED HIS CHURCH. In condescending to unite himself with human nature; in bearing the infirmities of childhood and state of subjection; in bearing the contradiction of sinners and the wrath of God. And still in standing and knocking (Rev. iii. 20); in bearing with half-hearted believers (2 Pet. iii. 9); in pleading with and for the wayward (1 John ii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 20); in seeking and following individual sheep. The love which led to this was free, not deserved or purchased. Rachel brought no dowry to Jacob. The Church has of its own no spiritual wealth (Isa. lxiv. 6; Rom. iii. 23). The Bridegroom had to sanctify and cleanse it. By nature unholy, at variance with God's will; yet, knowing this, he loved it (cf. Rom. viii. 35). For love to Rachel Jacob gave the labour of fourteen years. For the Church Christ grudged nothing—gave himself. Sacrifice a mark of true love. How many will not sacrifice anything—will not leave a gain, a companion, an amusement—to "win Christ." In the garden his human nature shrank from the bitterness of the cup, but he persevered. Why?

II. THE LORD "SERVED" THAT HE MIGHT UNITE US TO HIMSELF. Marriage, the closest earthly tie, used as a type. No mere removal of condemnation satisfied that love, nor even our being made happy; he became such as we are, that we might become such as he is. The Church is his Bride (Ephes. v. 27; Rev. xxi. 9), sharer of his kingdom (Rev. iii. 21; xx. 4), of his blessedness and glory (John xvii. 22—24). And this belongs to its humblest and weakest member. A union in this life (Cant. ii. 16; John xv. 4); peace in committing all cares to him, even our own steadfastness (John x. 28; Rom. viii. 35; Heb. xiii. 6). A union after our departure more close (Phil. i. 23). Here we see dimly (1 Cor. xiii. 12). The conditions of mortal life hinder clear visions (Exod. xxxiii. 20). The law of sin in our members hinders perfect union. Then no impediment (Luke xxiii. 43). Union perfected after the resurrection (1 Thess. iv. 7). The body, which now limits conscious union, shall

then minister to its completeness. Not till then shall we be perfectly like him in his human nature.

III. HE "SERVED" THAT WE MIGHT HAVE CONFIDENCE IN HIS LOVE. Jacob's love not shaken by time, or by the deceit practised upon him, a type of Christ's. Often forgetful, often faithless, we might well think, How dare I trust to a love so often neglected? But his love is not wearied out (Isa. xlix. 15). He has graven us with the nail-prints on his hands. His word is still, "Look unto me;" trust my love (Ps. xxxvii. 5).—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 31—**And when the Lord saw**—literally, *and Jehovah saw.* As Eve's son was obtained from Jehovah (ch. iv. 1), and Jehovah visited Sarah (ch. xxi. 1), and was entreated for Rebekah (ch. xxv. 21), so here he again interposes in connection with the onward development of the holy seed by giving children to Jacob's wives. The present section (vers. 31—35) is by Davidson, Kalisch, and others assigned to the Jehovist, by Tuch left undetermined, and by Colenso in several parts ascribed to the Elohist. Kalisch thinks the contents of this section must have found a place in the earlier of the two documents—**that Leah was hated,**—*i. e.* less loved (cf. Mal. i. 3)—**he opened her womb** (cf. 1 Sam. i. 5, 6; Ps. cxxvii. 3): **but Rachel was barren**—as Sarai (ch. xi. 30) and Rebekah (ch. xxv. 21) had been. The fruitfulness of Leah and the sterility of Rachel were designed not so much to equalise the conditions of the sisters, the one having beauty and the other children (Lange), or to punish Jacob for his partiality (Keil), or to discourage the admiration of mere beauty (Kalisch), but to prove that "the origin of Israel was to be a work not of nature, but of grace" (Keil).

Ver. 32.—**And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben** (literally, *Reu-ben,* Behold a Son! an expression of joyful surprise at the Divine compassion): **for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction.** Though not directly contained in the term Reuben, the sense of these words is implied (Kalisch). As Leah's child was an intimation that she had been an object of Jehovah's compassion, so did she expect it to be a means of drawing towards herself Jacob's affection. **Now therefore** (literally, *for now*) **my husband will love me.** She was confident in the first flush of maternal joy that Jacob's heart would turn towards her; she believed that God had sent her child to effect this conversion of her husband's affections; and she regarded the birth of Reuben as a signal proof of the Divine pity.

Ver. 33.—**And she conceived again, and bare a son** (probably the following year); **and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated** (the birth of Reuben had obviously not answered Leah's expectations in increasing Jacob's love), **he hath therefore given me this son also** (the faith and piety of Leah are as conspicuous as her affection for Jacob): **and she called his name Simeon**—i. e. *Hearing,* because God had heard that she was hated (*ut supra*).

Ver. 34.—**And she conceived again** (say, in the third year of her marriage), **and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me,**—לָוָה, to join, is the root from which comes לֵוִי (Levi), her son's name—**because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi**—Associated, or Joined.

Ver. 35.—**And she conceived again, and bare a son** (possibly in the fourth year of marriage, and in Jacob's eighty-eighth year of age, he having been seventy-seven when he arrived in Haran, and eighty-four when he was united to Laban's daughters): **and she said, Now will I praise the Lord.** Well she might; for this was the ancestor of the promised seed (Murphy). There cannot be a doubt that her excellence of character as well as eminence of piety eventually wrought a change upon her husband (*vide* ch. xxxi. 4, 14; xlix. 31). **Therefore she called his name Judah** (*i. e.* Praise); **and left bearing.** Literally, *stood still,* i. e. ceased, *from bearing.* Not altogether (ch. xxx. 16); only for a time, "that she might not be unduly lifted up by her good fortune, or attribute to the fruitfulness of her own womb what the faithfulness of Jehovah, the covenant God, had bestowed upon her" (Keil.)

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 31—35.—*Leah and Rachel, or the two wives.* I. RACHEL THE BELOVED. "Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah." That Leah was not hated in the sense of being regarded with aversion, the numerous family she bore to Jacob proves; that

she occupied a lower place than Rachel in her husband's affections is explicitly declared. This preference of Rachel to Leah was—1. *Natural in Jacob.* Rachel had been his heart's choice from the first, while Leah had been thrust upon him against his inclination. But even had this been otherwise, as no man can serve two masters, so can no husband love two wives equally—an argument against polygamy. 2. *Painful to Leah.* Had Leah loved Jacob less than she manifestly did, it is doubtful if the undue regard shown to Rachel would not have inflicted a grievous wound upon her wifely heart; but, entertaining towards him an affection strong and tender, she yearned for a larger share of his esteem, and at each successive child's birth gave utterance to a hope that he would yet be joined to her. No heavier blow can be dealt by a husband to the tender heart of a loving wife than to withdraw from her his love, or even to be cold and indifferent in its expression. 3. *Sinful in the sight of God.* Though not so beautiful as Rachel, Leah was yet entitled to an equal share with her in Jacob's affection. Equally with Rachel she was Jacob's wife. It was Jacob's sin that he had married her at all when he did not either love or desire her. On detecting the fraud he should have instantly repudiated the engagement. But having publicly ratified the contract with Leah by fulfilling her week, he owed to Leah a full share of his affection as a husband. Nay, though not the wife his inclination had selected, there is reason for believing that Leah, rather than Rachel, was the bride God had chosen (Leah was the ancestress of the Saviour); hence doubly was Jacob bound to love Leah equally with Rachel.

II. Leah the fruitful. While Rachel enjoyed the highest place in Jacob's affection, she was "barren"—a grievous affliction to one who might possibly be the mother of the promised Seed. The fruitfulness of Leah was—1. *Expressly caused by God.* The Lord, who had decreed temporary barrenness for Rachel the fair, opened the womb of Leah the despised; neither to compensate Leah for the loss of Jacob's love, nor to punish Jacob for his sinful partiality; but to manifest his power, to show that children are the heritage of the Lord, to vindicate his sovereignty, to attest that God giveth families to whomsoever he will, and to suggest that the line of promise was designed to be not the fruit of nature, but the gift of grace. 2. *Thankfully acknowledged by Leah.* While cherishing the hope that her children would eventually unite Jacob's heart to her own, she delightedly recognised her exceptional fruitfulness as a special mark of Jehovah's favour, and gave expression to her gratitude in the naming of her sons: Reuben, see, a son! Simeon, hearing; Levi, joined; Judah, praise. 3. *Enviously beheld by Rachel.* This appears from the opening statement in the ensuing chapter; and this, though perhaps as natural as Leah's sense of pain at Rachel's preference by Jacob, was yet as sinful as Jacob's excessive partiality towards herself.

Learn—1. The sinfulness and sorrow of having more wives at once than one. 2. The wickedness of wedding where one does not love. 3. The sovereignty of God in giving and withholding children. 4. The cruelty and criminality of showing partiality towards those who possess an equal claim on our affections. 5. The duty and profit of remembering and acknowledging family mercies.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXX.

Ver. 1.—**And when Rachel saw** (apparently after, though probably before, the birth of Leah's fourth son) **that she bare Jacob no children** (literally, *that she bare not to Jacob*), **Rachel envied her sister** (was jealous of her, the root referring to the redness with which the face of an angry woman is suffused); **and said unto Jacob, Give me children** (sons), **or else I die**—literally, *and if not, I am a dead woman;* i.e. for shame at her sterility. Rachel had three strong reasons for desiring children—that she might emulate her sister, become more dear to her husband, and above all share the hope of being a progenitrix of the promised Seed. If not warranted to infer that Rachel's barrenness was due to lack of prayer on her part and Jacob's (Keil), we are at least justified in asserting that her conduct in breaking forth into angry reproaches against her husband was unlike that of Jacob's mother, Rebekah, who, in similar circumstances, sought relief in prayer and oracles (Kalisch). The brief period that had elapsed since Rachel's marriage, in comparison with the twenty years of Rebekah's barrenness, signally discovered Rachel's sinful impatience.

Ver. 2.—**And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel** (not without just cause, since she not only evinced a want of faith and resignation, but wrongfully imputed blame to him): **and he said,** Am I **in God's stead,** —*i. e.* am I omnipotent like him? This you yourself will surely not presume to believe. The interrogative particle conveys the force of a spirited denial (*vide* Ewald, 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 324)—**who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?** Rachel herself understood that God alone could remove sterility (ver. 6); but to this fact jealousy of Leah appears for the moment to have blinded her.

Ver. 3.—**And she said,**—resorting to the sinful expedient of Sarah (ch. xvi. 2), though without Sarah's excuse, since there was no question whatever about an heir for Jacob; which, even if there had been, would not have justified a practice which, in the case of her distinguished relative, had been so palpably condemned—**Behold my maid Bilhah** (*vide* ch. xxix. 29), **go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees,**—*i. e.* children that I may place upon my knees, as mothers do (Piscator, A Lapide, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Lange, Ainsworth); the literal sense of the words being too absurd to require refutation—**that I may also have children**—literally, *be builded up* (cf. ch. xvi. 2)—**by her.**

Ver. 4.—**And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.** "Whence we gather that there is no end of sin where once the Divine institution of marriage is neglected" (Calvin). Jacob began with polygamy, and is now drawn into concubinage. Though God overruled this for the development of the seed of Israel, he did not thereby condone the offence of either Jacob or Rachel.

Ver. 5.—**And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.** "Conception and birth may be granted to irregular marriages" (Hughes). "So God often strives to overcome men's wickedness through kindness, and pursues the unworthy with his grace" (Calvin).

Ver. 6.—**And Rachel said, God hath judged me,**—"hath chastened me," as in ch. xv. 14 (Ainsworth, Wordsworth); better, "hath procured for me justice," as if reckoning her sterility an injustice by the side of Leah's fecundity (Keil, Lange); or, hath carried through my cause like a patron, *i. e.* hath vindicated me from the reproach of barrenness (Munster, Rosenmüller); or, hath dealt with me according to his sovereign justice, withholding from me the fruit of the womb while I was forgetful of my dependence on him, and granting me posterity when I approached him in humble supplication (Murphy), which it is obvious from the next clause that Rachel did—**and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son.** With undue severity older interpreters regard Rachel as using the Divine name *more hypocritarum*, who, when their schemes prosper, think that God favours them (Vatablus, Calvin). The employment of Elohim by Jacob and Rachel, supposed to mark the first thirteen verses as belonging to the primitive document (Tuch, Bleek, Kalisch), though by others (Davidson, Colenso) they are ascribed to the Jehovist, is sufficiently explained by Rachel's consciousness that in a large measure her handmaid's son was rather the fruit of her own impious device than the gift of Jehovah (Hengstenberg). **Therefore called she his name Dan**—*i. e.* "Judge," one decreeing justice, *vindex*, from דִּין, to judge (Gesenius, Keil, Lange, *et alii*), though, as in other proper names, *e. g.* Joseph, Zebulun, in which two verbs are alluded to, Michaelis thinks *non a judicando solum, sed et ab audiendo nomen accepisse Danem*, and connects it with another verb, a denominative from an Arabic root, signifying to hear (*vide* 'Suppl.,' p. 425).

Vers. 7, 8.—**And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister,**—literally, *wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my sister*, meaning, by "wrestlings of Elohim;" not great wrestlings in rivalry with Leah (A. V., Vatablus, Ainsworth, Rosenmüller, Calvin), nor wrestlings in the cause of God, as being unwilling to leave the founding of the nation to her sister alone (Knobel), but wrestlings with God in prayer (Delitzsch, Lange, Murphy, Kalisch), wrestlings regarding Elohim and his grace (Hengstenberg, Keil), in which she at the same time contended with her sister, to whom apparently that grace had been hitherto restricted—**and I have prevailed** (scarcely in the sense of achieving a victory over Leah, who had already borne four sons, but in the sense of drawing the Divine favour, though only indirectly, towards herself): **and she called his name Naphtali**—*i. e.* "My Wrestling."

Ver. 9.—**When Leah saw that she had left bearing** (literally, *stood from bearing*, as in ch. xxix. 35), **she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her to Jacob to wife**—being in this led astray by Rachel's sinful example, both as to the spirit of unholy rivalry she cherished, and the questionable means she employed for its gratification.

Vers. 10, 11.—**And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh.** בָּגָד, for בְּגָד, in or with good fortune; ἐν τύχῃ (LXX.); *feliciter*, sc. this happens to me (Vulgate), a translation which has the sanction of Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, and other competent authorities—the Keri, which is followed by Onkelos and Syriac, reading בָּא גָד,

fortune cometh. The Authorised rendering, supported by the Samaritan, and supposed to accord better with ch. xlix. 19, is approved by Calvin, Ainsworth, Bush, and others. **And she called his name Gad**—*i. e.* Good Fortune.

Vers. 12, 13.—**And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I,**—literally, *in* my happiness, *sc.* am I ('Speaker's Commentary'); or, *for* or *to* my happiness (Keil, Kalisch)—**for the daughters will call me blessed** (or, happy): **and she called his name Asher**—*i. e.* Happy.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—13.—*Rachel and Leah, or unholy rivalry.* I. RACHEL'S ENVY OF LEAH. 1. *The insufficient cause.* "She saw that she bare Jacob no children," while Leah had begun to have a family. Though commonly regarded by Hebrew wives as a peculiarly severe affliction, childlessness was not without its compensations, which Rachel should have reckoned. Then the motherhood of Leah was the good fortune of a sister, in which Rachel should have lovingly rejoiced; and both the barrenness and the fruitfulness were of God's appointment, in which Rachel should have piously acquiesced. 2. *The querulous complaint.* "Give me children, or else I die." To inordinately long for children was, on Rachel's part, a great sin; to depreciate the gift of life with its manifold blessings because of their absence was a greater sin; to express her bitter and despondent feeling in reproachful language against her husband was a sin still greater; but the greatest sin of all was to overlook the hand of God in her affliction. 3. *The merited rebuke.* "Am I in God's stead?" If Jacob sinned in being angry with Rachel, evincing want of sympathy and patience with her womanly distress, if even he erred in infusing a too great degree of heat into his words, he yet acted with propriety in censuring her fault. It is the province of a husband to reprove grievous misdemeanours in a wife, only not with severity, as Jacob, yet with Jacob's fidelity. 4. *The sinful expedient.* "Behold my maid Bilhah." Sanctioned by popular custom, the plan adopted by Rachel for obtaining children might almost seem to have been sanctified by the conduct of Sarah. But the circumstances in which the two wives were placed were widely different. Yet, even though they had been the same, Rachel was not at liberty, any more than Sarah, to tempt her husband to a violation of the marriage law. The bad example of a saint no more than the evil practice of the world can justify a sin. 5. *The apparent success.* "Rachel's maid conceived." God often allows wicked schemes to prosper, without approving of either the schemes or the schemers. Sometimes their success is needful, as in this case, to manifest their wickedness and folly. 6. *The mistaken inference.* "God hath judged me." Rachel is not the only person who has reckoned God upon his side because of outward prosperity. The world's standard of morality is success. But moral triumphs are frequently achieved through material defeats.

II. LEAH'S IMITATION OF RACHEL. 1. *Of Rachel's bad feeling.* She might have borne with her sister's exultation over the happiness of reaching motherhood by proxy, might have allowed Rachel to have her little triumph, but she could not. Immediately foreseeing the possibility of being out-distanced by her favoured rival, she became a victim of green-eyed jealousy. The envy stirring in the heart of Rachel had at length spread its contagion to her. 2. *Of Rachel's sinful conduct.* "Leah took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife." One never knows where the influence of a bad example is to end. When one saint steps aside from the straight path others are sure to follow. The more eminent the first transgressor is, the easier sinning is to his successors. 3. *Of Rachel's wrong reasoning.* "The daughters will call me blessed." Faulty logic (at least in morals) seems as easy to copy as improper feelings or wicked deeds. The connection between much happiness and many children is not absolute and inevitable. The hopes of rejoicing mothers are sometimes sadly blighted, and their expectations of felicity strangely disappointed. She is truly happy whom not the daughters, but Jehovah, pronounces blessed.

Lessons:—1. The bitterness of envy. 2. The wickedness of polygamy. 3. The contagiousness of sin.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Envy working in God's people.* "Rachel envied her sister." Jacob's love for Rachel a type of Christ's love for his Church. We cannot doubt that his love was returned. There was thus the chief element of conjugal happiness. But her sister, less favoured in this, had a blessing which was denied her, and "Rachel envied her sister." It was not that she feared to lose her husband's love. Of that she had abundant proof. It was a selfish sorrow. Her husband's children were growing up, but they were not hers. Rachel's envy has its counterpart among Christians. Love for Christ may take the form of selfish zeal; unwillingness to acknowledge or rejoice in work for God in which we take no part. In the spiritual history of the world a blessing often seems to rest upon means irregular or unlikely. Where efforts that promised well have failed, God makes his own power felt; and many think this cannot be right (cf. John ix. 16), and would rather have the work not done than done thus (cf. Numb. xi. 28; Mark ix. 38). Contrast the spirit of St. Paul (Phil. i. 18). Examples of this: unwillingness to rejoice in good done by some other communion, or some other party than our own; inclination to look at points of difference rather than at those held in common; the work of others doubted, criticised, or ignored; eagerness to warn against this or that. Self lies at the root of this. Perhaps the harvest of another seems to diminish ours. Perhaps our own thoughts are to us the measure of God's plans (cf. Mark xiv. 4). Men see the outside of others' work, and judge as if they knew both the motives and the full results. Yet with this there may be much real zeal and love for the Lord. The failure lies in the want of complete acceptance of his will. To rejoice in work for Christ, by whomsoever done, is not inconsistent with decided views as to the objects to be aimed at, and the means to be used (1 Thess. v. 21). 1. We are called to enlarge the household of God; to be the means of making enemies into children (cf. Ps. lxxxvii. 4, 5) through producing faith (cf. John i. 12). Each responsible for the faithful use of the powers given to us, and bidden to examine ourselves as to sincerity. But the visible results are as God pleases. Here a test of singleness of mind. Can we rejoice in success of a work in which we have no share, or when another's success appears greater than ours? (Gal. v. 26). 2. As an exercise of unselfishness, be careful not to provoke envy by parading distinctive peculiarities (Rom. xii. 18) or exalting our own work. 3. Be not discouraged that work of others seems more blessed (John iv. 36, 37). Faithfulness is within the power of all. It is that which God regards (Matt. xxv. 21). The result we cannot judge of here. The fruit delayed may prove a greater blessing.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 14.—**And Reuben** (at this time four or five years old) **went** (probably accompanying the reapers) **in the days of wheat harvest** (in the beginning of May), **and found mandrakes**—דּוּדָאִים, μῆλα μανδραγορῶν (LXX., Josephus), apples of the mandragora, an herb resembling belladonna, with a root like a carrot, having white and reddish blossoms of a sweet smell, and with yellow odoriferous apples, ripening in May and June, and supposed, according to Oriental superstition, to possess the virtue of conciliating love and promoting fruitfulness (*vide* Gesenius, p. 191, and cf. Rosenmüller's 'Scholia,' and Kalisch *in loco*)—**in the field** (when at his childish play), **and brought them unto his mother Leah** (which a son of more mature years would not have done). **Then Rachel** (not exempt from the prevailing superstition) **said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes** (in the hopes that they would remove her sterility).

Ver. 15—**And she** (Leah) **said unto her,** —*stomachose* (Calvin)—Is it **a small matter that thou hast taken my husband?**—literally, *Is it little thy taking away my husband?* meaning that Rachel had been the cause of Jacob's forsaking her (Leah's) society—**and wouldest thou take away** (literally, *and to take also* = wouldst thou take? expressive of strong surprise) **my son's mandrakes also?** Calvin thinks it unlikely that Jacob's wives were naturally quarrelsome; *sed Deus confligere eas inter se passus est ut polygamiæ pœna ad posteras extaret.* **And Rachel said** (in order to induce Leah's compliance with her request), **Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.**

Ver. 16.—**And Jacob came out of the field in the evening,**—*i. e.* the harvest-field (ver. 14)—**and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me** (the Samaritan codex adds "this night," and the LXX. "to-day"); **for surely I have hired thee** (literally, *hiring I have hired thee*) **with my son's mandrakes. And** (assenting to the arrangement of his wives) **he lay with her that night.**

Ver. 17.—**And God hearkened unto Leah,**—*i. e.* unto Leah's prayers (Onkelos, Jerome, Rosenmüller, Murphy), which Calvin thinks doubtful—*quis enim putaret, dum odiose sorori suæ negat Lea fructus a puero collectos, et hoc pretio noctem mariti mercatur, ullum esse precibus locum.* The historian employs the term Elohim to show that Leah's pregnancy was not owing to her son's mandrakes, but to Divine power (Keil, Lange)—**and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son**—or, counting Zilpah's, the seventh; while, reckoning Bilhah's, this was Jacob's ninth child.

Ver. 18.—**And Leah said, God**—Elohim; a proof of the lower religious consciousness into which Leah had fallen (Hengstenberg), though perhaps on the above hypothesis an evidence of her piety and faith (Keil, Lange)—**hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband:**—*i. e.* as a reward for my self-denial (Keil, Murphy); an exclamation in which appears Leah's love for Jacob (Lange), if not also a tacit acknowledgment that she had her fears lest she may have sinned in asking him to wed Zilpah (Rosenmüller)—**and she called his name Issachar**—"There is Reward," or "There is Hire;" containing a double allusion to her hire of Jacob and her reward for Zilpah

Vers. 19, 20.—**And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God** (Elohim; *vide supra*) **hath endued me with a good dowry.** Δεδώρηταί μοι δῶρον καλὸν (LXX.), *dotavit me dote bona* (Vulgate), hath presented me with a goodly present. The word זָבַד is a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον. **Now will my husband dwell with me.** זָבַל, also a ἅπαξ λεγ., signifies to be or make round (Gesenius), to limit round or encompass (Fürst); hence, according to both, to cohabit or dwell together as husband and wife. The LXX. render αἱρετιεῖ, the meaning being that Leah's six sons would, in her judgment, be an inducement sufficiently powerful to cause Jacob to select her society instead of that of her barren sister. **And she called his name Zebulun**—*i. e.* Dwelling; from *zabal*, to dwell with, with a play upon the word זָבַל, to hire, which, commencing with the same letter, was regarded as similar in sound to זָבַד, the ד and the ל being sometimes interchangeable (Keil, Kalisch).

Ver. 21.—**And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah**—*i. e.* Judgment. Dinah (the female Dan) may not have been Jacob's only daughter (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 35; xlvi. 7). Her name is here recorded probably because of the incident in her history afterwards related (ch. xxxiv. 1).

Vers. 22—24.—**And God remembered Rachel** (cf. ch. viii. 1; 1 Sam. i. 19), **and God hearkened to her,**—as to Leah (ver. 17)—**and opened her womb**—as he had previously done to Leah (ch. xxix. 31). Rachel's barrenness had not continued so long as either Sarah's or Rebekah's. **And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach**—*i. e.* of sterility. The mandrakes of Leah having proved inefficacious, Rachel at length realises that children are God's gift, and this thought sufficiently explains the use of the term Elohim. **And she called his name Joseph;**—יוֹסֵף, either, "he takes away," with allusion to the removal of her reproach, or, "he shall add," with reference to her hope of another son. Perhaps the first thought is not obscurely hinted at, though the second appears from the ensuing clause to have occupied the greater prominence in Rachel's mind—**and said, The Lord**—Jehovah; a trace of the Jehovistic pen (Tuch, Bleek, *et alii*); rather an outcome of the higher spiritual life of Rachel, who had now got emancipated from all such merely human devices as resorting to mandrakes, and was able to recognise her complete dependence for offspring on the sovereign grace of the covenant God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (Hengstenberg, Keil)—**shall add to me another son.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 14—24.—*The story of the mandrakes.* I. A YOUNG CHILD'S INNOCENCE. "Reuben found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother." Nature, with its beautiful sights and harmonious sounds, possesses a wonderful fascination for the infant mind. In proportion as man sinks beneath the power of sin does he fall out of sympathy with God's fair world. Strong and tender is the bond of love which unites a child to its mother. The true depositary for a child's treasures is the mother's lap, for a child's joys and sorrows the mother's heart. Yet a child's inexperience and simplicity may sometimes cause a parent to err, though the true

source of temptation lies in the parent, and not in the child. "To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled is nothing pure."

II. A GROWN WOMAN'S SUPERSTITION. "Give me of thy son's mandrakes." Rachel obviously shared the popular belief that Reuben's fragrant herbs would have an influence in removing her sterility. It is useless inquiring how such a notion originated. Superstitions commonly arise from mistaking as cause and effect what are only coincident occurrences. Of more importance it is to note that Rachel was of mature years, had been born and nurtured in what may be regarded as a religious home, was now the wife of an intelligent and pious (if also encompassed with infirmities) man, and yet she was the victim of delusive beliefs. In this Rachel was perhaps scarcely to be charged with blame. Superstition is essentially a fault of the intellect resulting from defective information. But Rachel erred in calling superstition to her aid in her unholy rivalry with Leah; all the more when she knew that God alone could remove her reproach.

III. A JEALOUS WIFE'S BARGAIN. On the part both of Rachel and Leah it was a miserable compact; and a pitiable spectacle it surely was, that of two rival wives contracting with one another about their husband's society. Rachel disposes of Jacob for a night in consideration of a handful of mandrakes, and Leah counts herself entitled to Jacob's favours as a boon which she had purchased with Reuben's yellow apples. Not to speak of the humiliation in all this to Jacob, and the continual misery to which he must have been subjected between his ardent sister-wives, think of the wretchedness it must have entailed upon the women themselves, and the dispeace it must have brought into the rival homes. A more powerful condemnation of polygamy it will be difficult to find, or a more signal illustration of the retribution which sooner or later follows on the heels of transgression.

IV. A SOVEREIGN GOD'S DECISION. The two wives were seemingly uncertain whether to ascribe virtue to the mandrakes or not. God determined the problem in a way that must have fully convinced them. 1. That the mandrakes could not remove sterility he demonstrated by allowing Rachel's barrenness to continue at least two years longer, though she had made use of Reuben's apples, and by opening Leah's womb without them. 2. That he alone could bestow offspring on married people he showed by remembering Rachel in his own time, and causing her reproach to depart.

Learn—1. That things and persons innocent and pleasant in themselves may lead astray. 2. That out of small occasions great events may spring. 3. That much infirmity may cling to good men and women. 4. That things desirable in themselves may be sought in wrong ways. 5. That God's hand should be recognised in the giving or withholding children.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 22—24.—*The life of faith and its reward.* The Scripture teaches us to put the facts of common life in the light of God's countenance. The true foundation on which family welfare rests is God's faithfulness and favour. The intense desire of the Hebrew women for children, especially sons, a testimony to the Divine covenant; the original promise pervading all the national life.

I. The birth of Joseph a REWARD OF FAITH AND ANSWER TO PRAYER. God remembers, though we think he forgets. Reproach may lie awhile on the true believer, but is taken away at last. Syrophenician woman; seeming neglect calls out stronger expression of faith. Pray without ceasing.

II. BLESSINGS WAITED FOR are the more appreciated and the richer WHEN THEY COME. "*Joseph*" a type of him who, though he was sent after many prophets and long tarrying, was greater than all his brethren. The Rachel, the true beloved, the chosen bride, the Church in whom the true Jacob finds special delight, waits and prays. When God shall show that he has remembered and hearkened, the elect one shall be abundantly satisfied. "God hath taken away my reproach."

III. All experience of Divine faithfulness is a great help, in looking forward, to cherish expectation. "The Lord shall add to me another son." We ask for more when we know that our prayer is heard.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 25.—**And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph,**—either at or about the expiry of the second term of seven years. Jacob's family now consisted in all of eleven sons and one daughter, unless Dinah's birth occurred later in the next term of service (Keil). Since these were all born within seven years, the chronological cannot be the order observed by the historian in recording the events of the preceding paragraphs. Rather the births of the children are arranged in connection with the mothers from whom they sprang. Hence the possibility of acquiring so large a family in so short a time. The six sons of Leah might be born in the seven years, allowing one year's complete cessation from pregnancy, viz., the fifth; Bilhah's in the third and fourth years; Zilpah's in the beginning of the sixth and seventh; and Rachel's toward the end of the seventh, leaving Dinah to be born later (cf. Keil *in loco*)—**that Jacob said unto Laban** (if not immediately, certainly soon, after Joseph's birth), **Send me away** (meaning that Laban should permit him to depart), **that I may go** (literally, *and I will go*) **unto mine own place, and to my country**—to Canaan in general, and to that part of it in particular where he had formerly resided (cf. ch. xviii. 33; xxxi. 55).

Ver. 26.—**Give** me (suffer me to take) **my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go** (literally, *and I will go*): **for thou knowest my service which I have done thee**—implying that he had faithfully implemented his engagement, and that Laban was aware of the justness of his demand to be released from further servitude.

Ver. 27.—**And Laban said unto him** (having learnt by fourteen years' acquaintance with Jacob to know the value of a good shepherd), **I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes** (the clause is elliptical, the A. V. rightly supplying), tarry: for (this word also is not in the original), **I have learned by experience**—literally, *I have divined* (נִחַשְׁתִּי, from נָחַשׁ, to hiss as a serpent, hence to augur); not necessarily by means of serpents (Gesenius, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or even by consulting his gods (Delitzsch, Kalisch), but perhaps by close observation and minute inspection (Murphy, Bush). The LXX. render οἰωνισάμην; the Vulgate by *experimento didici*—**that the Lord**—Jehovah. Nominally a worshipper of the true God, Laban was in practice addicted to heathen superstitions (cf. ch. xxxi. 19, 32)—**hath blessed me** (with material prosperity) **for thy sake.**

Ver. 28.—**And he said, Appoint me thy wages.** Literally, *distinctly specify* (from a root signifying to bore, hence to declare accurately) *thy hire upon me*, i. e. which I will take upon me as binding. Laban's caution to be clear and specific in defining the terms of any engagement he might enter into was much needed, and would doubtless not be neglected by Jacob, whose past experience must have taught him he was dealing with one who, in respect of covenants and contracts, was eminently treacherous. **And I will give it.**

Ver. 29.—**And he** (Jacob) **said unto him** (Laban), **Thou knowest how** (literally, *what*) **I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me**—literally, *and what thy cattle has been* (or become) *with me*, i. e. to what a number they have grown.

Ver. 30.—**For it was little which thou hadst before I came,**—literally, *for little* (it was) *which was to thee before me;* i. e. not in place, ἐναντίον ἐμοῦ (LXX.), but in time, *i. e.* before my arrival—**and it is now increased**—literally, *broken forth* (cf. ver. 43)—**unto a multitude; and the Lord** (Jehovah) **hath blessed thee since my coming** (literally, *at my foot*, i. e. wherever I have gone among your flocks): **and now when shall I provide** (literally, *do*) **for mine own house also?**

Ver. 31.—**And he** (Laban, unwilling to part with so profitable an assistant) **said, What shall I give thee?** He was apparently prepared to detain Jacob at his own terms. **And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me anything.** Jacob did not design to serve Laban gratuitously, but chose rather to trust God than Laban for recompense (Wordsworth, Gosman in Lange); or he may have meant that he would have no wages of Laban's setting, but only of his own proposing (Hughes). **If thou wilt do this thing for me** (accede to this stipulation), **I will again feed** and **keep thy flock**—literally, *I will turn, I will tend thy flock, I will keep* (*sc.* it).

Ver. 32.—**I will pass through all thy flock to-day,**—wrongly rendered παρελθέτω πάντα τὰ πρόβατά σου (LXX.), *gyra per omnes greges tuos* (Vulgate), as if Jacob proposed that the separation of the flocks should be effected by Laban, and not by himself—**removing from thence**—not "remove thou," as if the verb were imperative (Rosenmüller, Murphy, Kalisch), but "to remove," the verb being in the inf. (Keil; cf. Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 279)—**all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among**

the goats. Since in Oriental countries sheep are commonly white and goats black, the number of speckled and spotted animals (*i. e.* sheep with little spots and large patches of black, and goats with little or large points of white, in their hair) would be unusually small. **And of such shall be my hire**—*i. e.* the dark-spotted or entirely black sheep and white or white-speckled goats were to be Jacob's reward (Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Lange), which was to be subsequently increased by whatever speckled animals might appear among the one-coloured flocks; but it seems more probable that Jacob only claimed the latter, and, both to make the bargain more attractive to Laban and to show that he wanted nothing from Laban but only what God might be pleased in accordance with this arrangement to bestow, he suggested that the flocks and herds should be purged of all such speckled and spotted animals to begin with (Tuch, Baumgarten, Kurtz, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Candlish, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Clarke, Bush).

Ver. 33.—**So shall my righteousness** (literally, *and my righteousness*) **answer for me** (or bear testimony in my behalf) **in time to come,** — literally, *in the day, to-morrow;* meaning in the future (Gesenius) rather than the day following (Delitzsch)—**when it shall come for my hire before thy face.** Either, (1) for it (my righteousness) shall come, concerning my wages, before thy face, *sc.* for consideration (Calvin); or, (2) when thou shalt come to my reward, connecting "before thy face" with the previous clause (Chaldee, Rosenmüller, Ainsworth, Lange); or, (3) when thou shalt come to my wages before thee (Murphy), or to inspect it (Kalisch). **Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me**—and therefore to be delivered up to thee.

Ver. 34.—**And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.** Jacob's chances of obtaining speckled animals by this arrangement were so small that Laban, with his customary selfishness, had no difficulty in closing with the offered bargain. As originally proposed by Jacob it seems to have been an honest desire on his part to commit the question of wages to the decision rather of God's providence than of his kinsman's greed. That at this time Jacob's mind "had already formed the whole fraudulent procedure by which he acquired his wealth" (Kalisch) does not accord with the statement subsequently made.

Ver. 35.—**And he**—Laban (Rosenmüller, Keil, Delitzsch, Kalisch, Murphy, *et alii*); Jacob (Lange)—**removed that day** (that the smallest possible chance of success might remain to his nephew) **the he-goats that were ringstraked** (striped or banded) **and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted,** and **every one that had** some **white in it, and all the brown among the sheep,**—four sorts of animals were to be removed: (1) the dotted, (2) the patched, (3) the ring-marked or striped, and (4) the black or brown—**and gave them into the hand of his** (Laban's or Jacob's, *ut supra*) **sons.**

Ver. 36.—**And** (as if to insure the impossibility of the two flocks mingling and breeding) **he set three days' journey betwixt himself** (with his sons and the parti-coloured animals) **and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks**—out of which he was to pay himself as best he could in accordance with the contract.

Ver. 37.—**And Jacob took him rods of green poplar**—literally, *a rod* (the singular being used collectively for rods) *of* לִבְנֶה, (from לָבַן, to be white, meaning either the) *poplar* (LXX., in Hosea iv. 13; Vulgate, Kalisch) *or the storax* (LXX. *in loco*, Keil; cf. Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 1404) *fresh or green*—**and of the hazel**—לוּז, the hazel tree (Raschi, Kimchi, Arabic, Luther, Fürst, Kalisch) or the almond tree (Vulgate, Saadias, Calvin, Gesenius, 'Speaker's Commentary') —**and chesnut tree**;—עַרְמוֹן, the plane tree (LXX., Vulgate, *et alii*), so called from its height—**and pilled white strakes in them** (literally, *peeled off in them peeled places white*), **and made the white appear** (literally, *making naked the white*) **which was in the rods.**

Ver. 38.—**And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters** (רְהָטִים; literally, *the canals or channels through which the water ran,* from a root signifying to run) **in the watering troughs** (שִׁקְתוֹת, *i. e.* the troughs which contained the water, to which the animals approached) **when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive** (literally, *and they became warm,* in the sense expressed in the A. V.) **when they came to drink**—this was Jacob's first artifice to overreach Laban.

Ver. 39.—**And the flocks conceived** (*ut supra*) **before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.** The fact is said to have been frequently observed that, particularly in the case of sheep, whatever fixes their attention in copulation is marked upon the young. That Jacob believed in the efficacy of the artifice he adopted is apparent; but the multiplication of parti-coloured animals it will be safer to ascribe to Divine blessing than to human craft.

Ver. 40.—**And Jacob did separate the**

lambs (*i. e.* the speckled lambs procured by the foregoing artifice he removed from the main body of the flock), **and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban** (this was Jacob's second artifice, to make the speckled lambs serve the same purpose as the pilled rods); **and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle**—so that they were not exposed to the risk of producing offspring of uniform colour.

Ver. 41.—**And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive,**—literally, *in every heating of the cattle, the bound ones*, i. e. the firm, compact sheep, "the spring flock" (Luther), which, being conceived in spring and dropped in autumn, are supposed to be stronger than those conceived in autumn and dropped in spring; but this is doubtful—**that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.** Jacob's third artifice aimed at securing for himself a vigorous breed of sheep.

Ver. 42.—**But when the cattle were feeble,**—literally, *in the covering* (sc. with wool; hence weakening) *of the flock*, which took place in autumn—**he put them not in** (partly to prevent the introduction of feeble animals amongst his parti-coloured flocks, but partly also, it is thought, to avoid prematurely exciting Laban's suspicion): **so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.**

Ver. 43.—**And**—as the apparent result of the triple stratagem, though *vide supra*, ver. 38, and cf. ch. xxxi. 12—**the man increased exceedingly,**—literally, *broke forth greatly* (vide ver. 30)—**and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses**—like Abraham (ch. xiii. 2) and Isaac (ch. xxvi. 13, 14). Thus far the historian simply narrates the fact of the patriarch's prosperity, and the steps which led to it, "without expressing approbation of his conduct or describing his increasing wealth as a blessing from God. The verdict is contained in what follows" (Keil).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 25—43.—*Jacob and Laban, or craft* versus *greed.* I. Jacob's respectful request of Laban. At the close of fourteen years' harsh and exacting service, Jacob desires permission to take his wives and children and return to Canaan. The motives which induced him were probably—1. The termination of his contract, which released him from a servitude both galling and oppressive. 2. The remembrance of God's covenant, which had assigned him the land of promise as his true inheritance. 3. The joy occasioned by the birth of Rachel's child, whom he seems to have regarded as the theocratic heir. 4. A desire to provide for his now rapidly-increasing household.

II. Jacob's selfish hindrance by Laban. That Jacob's uncle and father-in-law was unwilling to acquiesce in his departure and solicitous to retain him was due to—1. His appreciation of Jacob's qualities as a flock-master. Jacob felt he could appeal to "the service he had done" for the past fourteen years. 2. His discovery of a latent connection between Jacob's presence and his own augmenting prosperity. Laban, poor enough before his nephew's arrival, had shrewdly noted that the day of Jacob's coming had been the day of fortune's turning in his favour, and that, wherever his clever "brother" went, flocks and herds broke out beside him. 3. His secret hope of effecting easy terms with Jacob. Though ostensibly willing to take him at his own price, he was clearly calculating that he would not have much difficulty in over-reaching the man whom already he had cheated in the matter of his daughters.

III. Jacob's remarkable contract with Laban. He agrees to serve a third time with Laban on condition of receiving all the speckled and spotted, ringstraked and brown, animals that Laban's flocks might produce, after all of those sorts had been previously removed. 1. The proposal of such a singular condition on the part of Jacob was an act not of folly, but of faith, being tantamount to a committal of his cause to God instead of Laban. 2. The acceptance of it on the part of Laban was a pitiful display of greed, and a proof that the bygone years of prosperity had both awakened in his soul the insatiable demon of avarice and extinguished any spark of kindly feeling towards Jacob that may have once existed in his breast.

IV. Jacob's cunning stratagem against Laban. 1. The *nature* of it. This was the employment of a triple artifice: (1) by means of pilled rods to produce parti-coloured animals in Laban's flock; (2) on securing these, so to use them as to increase their number; and (3) to direct the animals in such a fashion that the

stronger and healthier portion of the flock should be his, and the feebler Laban's. 2. The *success* of it. That Jacob's stratagem did not fail is apparent; but how far it was due to the particular expedient employed cannot be so easily determined. That impressions made upon the minds of sheep at rutting time affect the fœtus seems a well-established fact; but the extraordinary rapidity with which brown and speckled animals were produced appears to point to the intervention of a special providence in Jacob's behalf. 3. The *rightness* of it. That in what Jacob did there was nothing fraudulent may be inferred from the fact that he acted under the Divine approval (ch. xxxi. 12), and made use of nothing but the superior knowledge of the habits of animals which he had acquired through his long experience in keeping sheep.

V. JACOB'S ULTIMATE ADVANCEMENT OVER LABAN. This comes out with greater prominence in the ensuing chapter; the present notices his amazing prosperity. "The man increased exceedingly;" and, in spite of Laban's craft and avarice combined, eventually eclipsed him in the possession of flocks and herds.

Learn—1. The attractive influence of home, both temporal and spiritual. 2. The danger of material prosperity—exemplified in Laban. 3. The wisdom of trusting God in all things, even in secular callings. 4. The value of all kinds of knowledge, but especially of the best. 5. The advantage of having God upon our side in all our bargains—notably when dealing with the selfish and mean. 6. The right to use all lawful means to preserve our interests—particularly against such as would invade them. 7. The possibility of the last outstripping the first—in the Church as well as in the world.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 43.—*Jacob's history an illustration of the blending together of the natural and the supernatural in God's dealings.* "And the man increased exceedingly," &c.

I. The PROMISE TO GUIDE, protect, and bless fulfilled in connection with the employment of ordinary faculties and instrumentalities. Jacob's craft partly natural, but in this instance specially assisted that he might be helped in an emergency. The "supplanter" in this case represented the better cause.

II. HUMAN DEVICES only apparently, and not really, thwart the purposes of God. Jacob represents the people of God. The victory is appointed them. Their interests must be served by the kingdoms of this world, though for a season the advantage appears on the side of the mere calculating, selfish policy. The true wisdom is that which cometh from above.

III. INCREASE in the best sense is God's promise. It will be sent as he wills and when he wills, but will be found the true answer to prayer and the true manifestation of love. On all that belongs to us the blessing rests. Spiritual prosperity carries with it all other. Though the individual may be called to suffer for the sake of the community, the promise to the Church must be fulfilled. "It is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." "The meek shall inherit the earth."—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Ver. 1.—**And he**—Jacob had now served twenty years with Laban, and must accordingly have been in his ninety-seventh or seventy-seventh year (*vide* ch. xxvii. 1)—**heard the words of Laban's sons,**—who were not at this time only small youths about fourteen years of age (Delitzsch), since they were capable of being entrusted with their father's flocks (ch. xxx. 35)—**saying** (probably in a conversation which had been overheard by Jacob), **Jacob hath taken away** (by fraud is what they meant, an opinion in which Kalisch agrees; but it is not quite certain that Jacob was guilty of dishonesty in acting as he did) **all that was our father's;** —this was a manifest exaggeration; *sed hoc morbo laborant sordidi et nimium tenaces, ut sibi ereptum esse putent quicquid non ingurgitant* (Calvin)—**and of that which was our father's hath he gotten** (literally, *made*, in the sense of acquiring, as in ch. xii. 5; 1 Sam. xiv. 48) **all this glory.** כָּבוֹד (from כָּבֵד, to be heavy, hence to be great in the sense of honoured, and also to be abundant) signifies either glory, splendour, renown, δόξα (LXX.), as in Job xiv. 21; or, what seems the preferable meaning here,

wealth, riches, *facultates* (Vulgate), as in Ps. xlix. 13; Nahum ii. 10. The two ideas appear to be combined in 2 Cor. iv. 17; βάρος δόξης (cf. Wordsworth, *in loco*).

Ver. 2.—**And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it** (*i. e.* either Laban or his countenance) was **not toward him** (literally, *with him*) **as before**—literally, *as yesterday and the day before*. The evident change in Laban's disposition, which had previously been friendly, was obviously employed by God to direct Jacob's mind to the propriety of returning to the land of his inheritance; and the inclination thus started in his soul was further strengthened and confirmed by a revelation which probably soon after, if not the night following, was sent for his direction.

Ver. 3.—**And the Lord**—Jehovah; since the entire journey to Padan-aram had been conducted under his special care, *vide* ch. xxviii. 15 (Hengstenberg), and not because the first three verses of this chapter have been inserted or modified by the Jehovist (Tuch, Bleek, *et alii*)—**said unto Jacob,**—probably in a dream (cf. vers. 5, 10, 11)—**Return unto the land of thy fathers** (*i. e.* Canaan), **and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.** So Jehovah had promised at Bethel twenty years before (ch. xxviii. 15).

Ver. 4.—**And Jacob sent**—being unwilling to approach the house lest Laban should discover his design (Rosenmüller)—**and called Rachel and Leah**—Rachel may be placed first as the beloved wife of Jacob (Wordsworth, Lange), scarcely as the principal wife in comparison with Leah, who was *adventitia* (Rosenmüller; cf. ver. 14)—**to the field unto his flock.** The expression "his flock" indicates that Jacob had abandoned Laban's sheep and taken possession of those which belonged to himself—probably in preparation for his departure.

Ver. 5.—**And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before** (*vide supra*); **but the God of my father**—literally, *and the Elohim of my father*, the term Elohim employed by Jacob not being due to "the vagueness of the religious knowledge" possessed by his wives (Hengstenberg), but to a desire on his own part either to distinguish the God of his father from the gods of the nations, or the idols which Laban worshipped ('Speaker's Commentary'), or perhaps, while using an expression exactly equivalent to Jehovah, to bring out a contrast between the Divine favour and that of Laban (Quarry)—**hath been with me**—literally, *was with me;* not the night before simply, but during the past six years, as he explains in ver. 7.

Ver. 6.—**And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.** The term Jacob here uses for power is derived from an unused onomatopoetic root, signifying to pant, and hence to exert one's strength. If, therefore, the assertion now made to his wives was not an unblushing falsehood, Jacob could not have been the monster of craft and deception depicted by some (Kalisch); while, if it was, it must have required considerable effrontery to appeal to his wives' knowledge for a confirmation of what they knew to be a deliberate untruth. The hypothesis that Jacob first acquired his great wealth by "consummate cunning," and then piously "abused the authority of God in covering or justifying them" (Kalisch), presupposes on the part of Jacob a degree of wickedness inconceivable in one who had enjoyed the sublime theophany of Bethel.

Ver. 7.—**And your father hath deceived me,**—הֵתֵל, the hiph. of תָּלַל, means to rob or plunder (Fürst), or to cause to fall, as in the cognate languages, whence to deceive (Gesenius)—**and changed my wages ten times;**—*i. e.* many times, as in Numb. xiv. 22; Job xix. 3 (Rosenmüller, Bush, Kalisch, Lange); as often as possible, the number ten expressing the idea of completeness (Keil, Murphy)—**but God** (Elohim, Jacob purposing to say that he had been protected, not by human stratagem, but by Divine interposition) **suffered him not to hurt me**—literally, *to do evil to me*. The verb here construed with עִמָּד = עִם is sometimes followed by אֶל (1 Kings xvii. 20), and sometimes by בְּ (1 Chron. xvi. 22).

Ver. 8.—**If he** (*i. e.* Laban) **said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages;**—by the original contract Jacob had been promised all the parti-coloured animals (ch. xxx. 32); here it seems as if Laban, struck with the remarkable increase of these, took the earliest opportunity of so modifying the original stipulation as to limit Jacob's portion to one sort only, viz. the speckled. Yet this dishonourable breach of faith on the part of Laban was of no avail; for, when the next lambing season came—**then** (it was discovered that) **all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus** (changing the sort of animals assigned to his son-in-law), **The ringstraked shall be thy hire** (the result was as before); **then bare all the cattle ringstraked.**

Ver. 9.—**Thus**—literally, *and* (as the result of this)—**God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.** In ascribing to God what he had himself effected by (so-called) fraud, this language of Jacob appears to some inexcusable (Kalisch); in passing over his own stratagem in silence Jacob has been charged with not telling the whole truth to his wives (Keil). A more charitable consideration of Jacob's statement, however, discerns in it an evidence of his

piety, which recognised and gratefully acknowledged that not his own "consummate cunning," but Jehovah's watchful care had enabled him to outwit the dishonest craft of Laban (Rosenmüller, Ainsworth, Bush, Candlish, Murphy).

Ver. 10.—**And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived** (this obviously goes back to the commencement of the six years' service), **that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams**—עַתֻּדִים, he-goats, from an unused root, to be ready, perhaps because ready and prompt for fighting (Gesenius, *sub voce*)—**which leaped** (literally, *going up*) **upon the cattle** were **ringstraked, speckled, and grisled.** The grisled (*beruddim*, from *barad*, to scatter hail) were spotted animals, as if they had been sprinkled with hail, not a fifth sort in addition to the four already mentioned (Rosenmüller), but the same as the *teluim* of ch. xxx. 35 (Kalisch). Wordsworth observes that the English term grisled, from the French word *grêle*, hail, is a literal translation of the Hebrew. Gesenius connects with the Hebrew root the words πάρδος, *pardus*, leopard (so called from its spots), and the French *broder*, to embroider. The LXX. understand the עַתֻּדִים to include both sheep and goats, and translate οἱ τράγοι καὶ οἱ κριοὶ ἀναβαίνοντες ἐπὶ τὰ πρόβατα καὶ τὰς αἶγας.

Ver. 11.—**And the angel of God**—literally, *the angel* (or Maleach) *of Elohim*, i. e. of the God who was with me and protecting me, though himself continuing unseen—**spake unto me in a dream,** saying, **Jacob: And I said, Here** am **I** (*vide* ch. xx. 1, 11).

Ver. 12.—**And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled.** Since all the parti-coloured animals had already been removed (ch. xxx. 35), this vision must have been intended to assure him that the flocks would produce speckled and spotted progeny all the same as if the ringstraked and grisled rams and he-goats had not been removed from their midst (cf. Kurtz, § 78). To insist upon a contradiction between this account of the increase of Jacob's flocks and that mentioned in ch. xxx. 37 is to forget that both may be true. Equally arbitrary does it seem to be to accuse Jacob of fraud in adopting the artifice of the pilled rods (Kalisch). Without resorting to the supposition that he acted under God's guidance (Wordsworth), we may believe that the dream suggested the expedient referred to, in which some see Jacob's unbelief and impatience (Kurtz, Gosman in Lange), and others a praiseworthy instance of self-help (Keil). **For I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.** If the preceding clause appears to imply that the vision was sent to Jacob at the beginning of the six years' service, the present clause seems to point to the end of that period as the date of its occurrence; in which case it would require to be understood as a Divine intimation to Jacob that his immense wealth was not to be ascribed to the success of his own stratagem, but to the blessing of God (Delitzsch). The difficulty of harmonising the two views has led to the suggestion that Jacob here mixes the accounts of two different visions accorded to him, at the commencement and at the close of the period of servitude (Nachmanides, Rosenmüller, Kurtz, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy, Candlish).

Ver. 13.—**I am the God of Beth-el,**—the angel here identifies himself with Jehovah (*vide* ch. xxviii. 13). Contrary to usual custom, הָאֵל, though in the construct. state, has the art. (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 290)—**where thou anointedst the pillar,** and **where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred**—*i. e.* to the land of Canaan, which was Jacob's true inheritance.

Vers. 14—16.—**And Rachel and Leah** (*vide* on ver. 4) **answered and said unto him** (Kalisch overdoes his attempt to blacken Jacob's character and whitewash Laban's when he says that Rachel and Leah were so entirely under their husband's influence that they spoke about their father "with severity and boldness bordering on disrespect." It rather seems to speak badly for Laban that his daughters eventually rose in protest against his heartless cruelty and insatiable greed), *Is there* **yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?** The interrogative particle indicates a spirited inquiry, to which a negative response is anticipated (cf. ch. xxx. 2; *vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 324). Kalisch obviously regards it as preposterous that Rachel and Leah should have expected anything, since "married daughters in the East never had any such claim where there were sons." But Laban had not treated Jacob's wives even as daughters. **Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us** (however much they loved Jacob they could not but resent the mercenary meanness of Laban, by which they, the free-born daughters of a chieftain, had been sold as common serfs), **and hath quite devoured also our money**—literally, *and hath eaten up, yea, even eating up, our money,* the inf. abs., אָכוֹל, after the finite verb, expressing the continuance (Keil) and intensity (Kalisch) of the action (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 280). **For**—כִּי is by some interpreters rendered but (Jarchi), so that (Keil), indeed (Kalisch), though there is no

sufficient reason for departing from the usual meaning "for" (Rosenmüller)—**all the riches which God hath taken from our father,**—thus Rachel and Leah also recognise the hand of God (Elohim) in Jacob's unusual prosperity—**that is ours, and our children's** (Rachel and Leah mean to say that what Jacob had acquired by his six years of service with their father was no more than would have naturally belonged to him had they obtained their portions at the first): **now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.** It is clear that, equally with himself, they were prepared for breaking off connection with their father Laban.

Vers. 17, 18.—**Then** (literally, *and*) **Jacob rose up** (expressive of the vigour and alacrity with which, having obtained the concurrence of his wives, Jacob set about fulfilling the Divine instructions), **and set his sons**—his children, as in ch. xxxi. 1; xxxii. 12, including Dinah, if by this time she had been born (*vide* ch. xxx. 21)—**and his wives upon camels.** Since neither were able to undertake a journey to Canaan on foot, his oldest son being not more than thirteen years of age, and his youngest not more than six. On the camel, *vide* ch. xii. 16. **And he carried away**—the verb נָהַג, to pant, which is specially used of those who are exhausted by running (Gesenius, *sub voce*), may perhaps indicate the haste with which Jacob acted—**all his cattle,**—*Mikneh*, literally, *possession*, from *kanah*, to procure, always used of cattle, the chief wealth of a nomad (cf. ch. xiii. 2; xxvi. 14)—**and all his goods which he had gotten,**—*Recush*, literally, *acquisition*, hence substance, wealth in general, from *racash*, to acquire (*vide* ch. xiv. 11, 16, 21; xv. 14), which, however, is more specifically described as—**the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten** (both of the above verbs, *kanah* and *racash*, being now employed) **in** (*i. e.* during his stay in) **Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.**

Ver. 19.—**And Laban went**—or, Now Laban had gone, probably to the other station, which was three days' journey from Jacob's flocks (*vide* ch. xxx. 36; and cf. ch. xxxi. 22)—**to shear his sheep.** In this work he would probably be detained several days, the time of shearing being commonly regarded as a festal season (cf. ch. xxxviii. 12; 1 Sam. xxv. 4; 2 Sam. xiii. 23), at which friendly entertainments were given. Whether Jacob's absence from the festivities is to be explained by the dissension existing between him and Laban, which either caused him to be uninvited or led him to decline the invitation (Kurtz), or by the supposition that he had first gone and subsequently left the banquet (Lange), the fact that Laban was so engaged afforded Jacob the opportunity he desired for making his escape. **And Rachel had stolen** (or, "and Rachel stole," availing herself likewise of the opportunity presented by her father's absence) **the images that were her father's.** The teraphim, from an unused root, *taraph*, signifying to live comfortably, like the Sanscrit *trip*, Greek τρέφειν, Arabic tarafa (Gesenius, Fürst, *sub voce*), appear to have been small human figures (cf. ch. xxxi. 34), though the image in 1 Sam. xix. 13 must have been nearly life-size, or at least a full-sized bust, sometimes made of silver (Judges xvii. 4), though commonly constructed of wood (1 Sam. xix. 13—16); they were worshipped as gods (εἴδωλα, LXX.; *idola*, Vulgate, cf. ch. xxxi. 30), consulted for oracles (Ezek. xxi. 26; Zech. x. 2), and believed to be the custodians and promoters of human happiness (Judges xviii. 24). Probably derived from the Aramæans (Fürst, Kurtz), or the Chaldeans (Ezek. xxi. 21, Kalisch, Wordsworth), the worship of teraphim was subsequently denounced as idolatrous (1 Sam. xv. 23; 2 Kings xiii. 24). Cf. with Rachel's act that ascribed to Æneas:—

"Effigies sacræ divûm, Phrygiique Penates,
Quos mecum a Troja, mediisque ex ignibus urbis,
Extuleram" (Virg., 'Æn.,' iii. 148—150).

Rachel's motive for abstracting her father's teraphim has been variously ascribed to a desire to prevent her father from discovering, by inquiring at his gods, the direction of their flight (Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller), to protect herself, in case of being overtaken, by an appeal to her father's gods (Josephus), to draw her father from the practice of idolatry (Bazil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Theodoret), to obtain children for herself through their assistance (Lengerke, Gerlach), to preserve a memorial of her ancestors, whose pictures these teraphim were (Lightfoot); but was probably due to avarice, if the images were made of precious metals (Pererius), or to a taint of superstition which still adhered to her otherwise religious nature (Chrysostom, Calvin, 'Speaker's Commentary'), causing her to look to these idols for protection (Kalisch, Murphy) or consultation (Wordsworth) on her journey.

Ver. 20.—**And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian,**—literally, *stole the heart of Laban the Syrian*, i. e. deceived his mind and intelligence, like κλέπτειν νόον, Hom., 'Il.,' xiv. 227 (cf. vers. 26, 27); hence = ἔκρυψε (LXX.); so Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Gesenius, and others. Lange fancifully understands by the heart of Laban which Jacob stole either Laban's daughters or his favourite Rachel. Gerlach contrasts Jacob's stealing with that of Rachel, in which Jacob had no part. The exact import of Jacob's stealing is declared by the words

that follow—**in that he told him not** (Lange and Bush interpret הִגִּיד impersonally, as signifying in that or because it was not told; but in this among expositors they stand alone) **that he fled.**

Ver. 21.—**So** (literally, *and*) **he fled with** (literally, *and*) **all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river,**—*i. e.* the Euphrates, which was called by pre-eminence the river (cf. 1 Kings iv. 21; Ezra iv. 10, 16)—**and set his face toward the mount Gilead.** גִּלְעָד, according to Gesenius, "the hard, stony region," from an unused quadrilateral root, signifying to be hard, though, according to the historian (by a slight change in the punctuation), "The hill, or heap of witness," from the transaction recorded in verses 45—47, which name it here proleptically receives, was not the mountain-range to the south of the Jabbok, now styled Jebel Jilâd (Gesenius), Jebel-es-Ssalt (Robinson), Jebel osha (Tristram), since Jacob had not yet crossed the river, but that upon its northern bank, called Jebel Ajlun, and situated near Mahanaim (Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, Porter).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—21.—*Jacob's flight from Laban.* I. THE HOMEWARD DESIRE. The longing to revisit Canaan, which six years previously Laban's exactions and Joseph's birth (ch. xxx. 25) had combined to inspire within the heart of Jacob, returned upon him with an intensity that could no longer be resisted. Accelerated in its vehemence partly by the interposed delay to which it had been subjected, partly by his further acquaintance with the meanness and craft of his uncle, and partly by his own rapidly-accumulating wealth, it was now brought to a head by—1. *The calumnious remarks of Laban's sons.* Inheriting the sordid and avaricious nature of their parent, they were filled with envy at the remarkable prosperity which had attended Jacob during the past six years. If good men are sometimes "envious at the foolish," it is not surprising that wicked men should occasionally begrudge the success of saints. Then from sinful desires they passed to wicked thoughts, accusing Jacob of having by superior craft out-manœuvred their designing father, and appropriated the flocks and herds that ought to have been his; which, however, was a manifest exaggeration, since Jacob had not taken away *all* their father's "glory," and an unjustifiable calumny, since it was not Jacob's stratagem, but God's blessing, that had multiplied the parti-coloured flocks. And lastly, from wicked thoughts they advanced to evil words, not only accusing Jacob in their minds, but openly vilifying him with their tongues, adding to the sin of private slander that of public defamation—conduct which the word of God severely reprehends (Prov. xxx. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 10; Titus iii. 2; James iv. 11). 2. *The manifest displeasure of Laban.* During the fourteen years that Jacob kept the flocks for Rachel and Leah, Laban regarded him with evident satisfaction; not perhaps for his own sake, but for the unprecedented increase in his (Laban's) pastoral wealth which had taken place under Jacob's fostering care. He was even disposed to be somewhat pious so long as the flocks and herds continued multiplying (ch. xxx. 27). But now, when at the end of six years the relative positions of himself and Jacob are reversed,—when Jacob is the rich man and he, comparatively speaking at least, the poor one,—not only does his piety towards God disappear, but his civility towards man does not remain. There are many Labans in the Church, whose religion is but the shadow that waits upon the sun of their prosperity, and many Labans in the world, whose amiability towards others is only the reflection of their complacent feeling towards themselves. 3. *The explicit command of God.* Twenty years before, at Bethel, God had promised to bring Jacob back again to Canaan, and now he issues formal instructions to his servant to return. As really, though not as visibly and directly, God orders the footsteps of all his children (Ps. xxxii. 8; xxxvii. 23). If it is well not to run before God's providence, as Jacob would have done had he returned to Canaan at the end of the fourteenth year, it is also well not to lag behind when that providence has been clearly made known. The assurance given to Jacob of guidance on his homeward journey is extended to all who, in their daily goings forth, obey the Divine instructions and follow the Divine leadings.

II. THE CONFERENCE IN THE FIELD. 1. *The explanation of Jacob.* Three contrasts complete the sum of Jacob's announcements to his wives. First, between the

growing displeasure of Laban their father and the manifest favour of the Elohim of his father (ver. 5); second, between the unwearied duplicity of their father, notwithstanding Jacob's arduous service, and the ever-watchful protection of God against his injurious designs (vers. 6, 7); and third, between the diminishing herds of Laban and the multiplying flocks of himself, Jacob, both of which were traceable to Divine interposition (vers. 8, 10, 12). After enlarging on these contrasts, he informs them of the Divinely-given order to return (ver. 13). 2. *The answer of Rachel and Leah.* Acknowledging the mean and avaricious spirit of their father, who had not only sold them as slaves, but unjustly deprived them of the portions to which, as the daughters of a chieftain, they were entitled (vers. 14, 15), they first confess that Jacob's wealth was nothing more than it would have been had they been honourably dowered at the first; second, recognise the hand of God in thus punishing their father and restoring to their husband what was practically his; and, third, encourage him to yield complete and prompt obedience to the Divine commandment (ver. 16).

III. THE HASTY DEPARTURE. In this there were four things discernible. 1. *Faith.* In setting his face towards Canaan he was acting in obedience to Divine instructions; and respect unto God's commandments is an essential characteristic of living faith. 2. *Love.* In determining "to go to Isaac his father" he was actuated by a true spirit of filial piety. 3. *Wisdom.* In stealing away unawares to Laban, while Laban was providentially detained at the sheep-shearing, there was commendable prudence, which, if possible, a good man should never lack. 4. *Sin.* Not indeed on Jacob's part, but on that of Rachel, who, taking advantage of her father's absence, carried off his Penates or household images.

Learn—1. That the love of country and friends is deeply implanted in the human breast. 2. That it is a great trial for worldly men to see good fortune go past their doors. 3. That the love of money, or the greed of gain, is the root of every kind of evil. 4. That the promises of God, however long delayed, are certain of fulfilment. 5. That loving husbands should consult their wives in all important steps in life. 6. That daughters should avoid speaking ill of parents, even should those parents deserve it. 7. That wives should always study to encourage their husbands in doing God's will. 8. That those who flee from oppression should seek for safety in paths of God's appointing. 9. That thriving and prosperous sons should not forget their parents in old age. 10. That daughters should not steal from their fathers, even to the extent of pilfering worthless images.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 19.—*Teraphim.* "Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's." This the first direct mention of images in connection with worship, though tradition speaks of Nimrod as an idolater (cf. Josh. xxiv. 2). Laban calls them his gods (ver. 30); yet he and his family knew the Lord. His use of them was a corruption of worship.

I. THE IMAGES. Teraphim. Had some resemblance to the human form (1 Sam. xix. 13). Of different sizes and materials. The manner of their use not very clear, but used in some way for worship. Apparently not as intentional rebellion against God. Rather as a help to worship him, but a help chosen in self-will. It was the error forbidden in the second commandment; a departure from the way of Abel, Noah, Abraham; the device of a soul out of harmony with spiritual things, and unable to realise God's presence in worship (cf. Exod. xxxii. 4; Judges viii. 27; xvii. 3; 1 Kings xii. 28). We live in midst of things claiming attention. Necessities of life compel it. And the good effect of diligence is quickly felt. This not evil, but becomes a snare unless spiritual life vigorous (Matt. xiii. 22; 1 Cor. vii. 29—31). The habit of looking earthward grows. The walk with God becomes less close. Then unreality in worship. Then the attempt by material aids to reconcile worship with an unchanged life. Hence, in the old time, teraphim; in our days, will worship.

II. THE EFFECT OF THIS ON THE MORAL CHARACTER AND ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE; exemplified in Laban. Compare him as presented in ch. xxiv. with what he now

appears. There he is hospitable, frank, and liberal; here he is sordid, ungenerous, deceitful even to his own nephew. There he acknowledges the Lord as the Guide of actions (ch. xxiv. 50, 51); here he speaks of "the God of your father," and of "my gods." The love of wealth had made God no longer first in his thoughts (cf. Ps. x. 4; Phil. iii. 19). Thus worship became a thing of times and seasons, a thing separate from daily life, and therefore possessing no influence on daily life. So in the Christian Church great attention to external aids and extravagant symbolism were the resources of a pervading spirit less spiritual than in times before; and these too often were as clouds hiding the face of God.

III. RACHEL'S ACT. Stole teraphim. Why? Some have thought to wean her father from them. More probably wished to make use of them. Had not escaped her father's influence. Hence the want of a submissive spirit (cf. ch. xxx. 1 with 1 Sam. i. 11). The evil spread in Jacob's household (ch. xxxv. 2). The necessity for making a stand against it (Josh. xxiv. 23).

IV. THE LESSON FOR OUR TIMES. The second commandment meets a real danger in every age—of leaning upon secondary means in religious service. Teraphim no longer tempt us. But amid whirl of active life, danger of leaning too much on outward impressions for spiritual life; of cultivating the emotions in place of spiritual earnestness (Ps. cxxx. 6; Matt. xi. 12); of putting religious services (1 Sam. xv. 22) or work (Matt. vii. 22) in place of walk with God. Amid much apparent religious activity the striving against self (Luke ix. 23) and growth in grace may become languid (1 John v. 21).—M.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The separation from Laban.* "And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian," &c. A great lesson on—

I. THE EVIL OF DISSIMULATION. Hatred and wrong the fruits of crafty ways. Family dissensions where the things of this world uppermost. Separations which are made in the spirit of dependence on God rend no true bond, but rather strengthen affection.

II. THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD. No justification of Laban, much imperfection in Jacob; yet the shield of Divine patience and mercy thrown over the man who vowed the vow of service, in whom his grace would yet be abundantly revealed. Laban's action controlled by God. He forbad the evil design. He stilleth the enemy and the avenger. "Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad" (ver. 29). "Touch not mine anointed," &c. When we are doing God's work and walking towards his chosen end we may leave it with him to speak with those who would hinder or harm us.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 22, 23.—**And it was told Laban on the third day**—*i. e.* the third after Jacob's departure, the distance between the two sheep-stations being a three days' journey (*vide* ch. xxx. 36)—**that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren**—*i. e.* his kinsmen, or nearest relations (cf. ch. xiii. 8; xxix. 15)—**with him, and pursued after him** (Jacob) **seven days' journey** (literally, *a way of seven days*); **and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.** The distance between Padan-aram and mount Gilead was a little over 300 miles, to perform which Jacob must at least have taken ten days, though Laban, who was less encumbered than his son-in-law, accomplished it in seven, which might easily be done by travelling from forty to forty-five miles a day, by no means a great feat for a camel.

Vers. 24, 25.—**And God**—Elohim is here employed, neither because the section belongs to the fundamental document (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, *et alii*), nor because, though Laban had an outward acquaintance with Jehovah (*vide* ver. 49), his real religious knowledge did not extend beyond Elohim (Hengstenberg), but simply because the historian wished to characterise the interposition which arrested Laban in his wrath as supernatural (Quarry)—**came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night,**—(cf. ch. xx. 3; Job xxxiii. 15; Matt. i. 20). This celestial visitation occurred the night before the fugitives were overtaken (*vide* ver. 29). Its intention was to guard Jacob, according to the promise of ch. xxviii. 15, against Laban's resentment—**and** (accordingly God) **said unto him, Take heed**—literally, *take heed for thyself*, the verb being followed by an ethical dative, as in ch. xii. 1; xxi. 16, *q. v.*—**that thou**

speak not to Jacob—literally, *lest thou speak with Jacob; μή ποτε λαλήσῃς μετὰ Ἰακὼβ* (LXX.)—**either good or bad.** Literally, *from good to bad*, meaning that on meeting with Jacob he should not pass from peaceful greetings to bitter reproaches (Bush, Lange), or say anything emphatic and decisive for the purpose of reversing what had occurred (Keil); or, perhaps more simply, say anything acrimonious or violent against Jacob (Rosenmüller, Murphy), the expression being a proverbial phrase for opposition or interference (Kalisch). (Cf. ch. xxiv. 50; 2 Sam. xiii. 23). **Then** (literally, *and*) **Laban overtook Jacob. Now** (literally, *and*) **Jacob had pitched his tent**—this was done by means of pins driven into the ground, the verb תָּקַע signifying to fasten, or fix anything by driving (cf. Judges iv. 21; Isa. xxii. 23, 25)—**in the mount** (*vide supra*, ver. 21): **and Laban with his brethren** (kinsmen, *ut supra*) **pitched**—his tent; not ἔστησε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς (LXX.)—**in the mount of Gilead** (*vide supra*, ver. 21).

Vers. 26—30.—**And Laban** (assuming a tone of injured innocence) **said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me,**—literally, *and* (meaning, in that) *thou hast stolen my heart* (*vide supra*, ver. 20; and cf. ver. 27)—**and carried away** (*vide* ver. 18) **my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?** Literally, *as captives of the sword*, i. e. *invitis parentibus* (Rosenmüller); language which, if not hypocritical on Laban's part, was certainly hyperbolical, since he had already evinced the strength of his parental affection by selling his daughters to Jacob; and besides, so far as it concerned either Jacob or his wives, it was quite untrue, Rachel and Leah having voluntarily accompanied their husband in his flight. **Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly,**—literally, *wherefore didst thou hide thyself to flee away;* חָבָא (niph.), with an inf. following, corresponding to the similar construction in Greek of λανθάνειν with a part., and being correctly rendered in English by an adverb (*vide* Gesenius, 'Gram.,' § 142)—**and steal away from me** (literally, *and steal me*, ut supra); **and didst not tell me, that I might** (literally, *and I would*) **have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs,**—in Oriental countries those about to make a long journey are still sent away *cantionibus et musicorum instrumentorum concentu* (Rosenmüller)—**with tabret,**—the toph was a drum or timbrel, consisting of a wooden circle covered with membrane, and furnished with brass bells (like the modern tambourine), which Oriental women beat when dancing (cf. Exod. xv. 20; Judges xi. 34; Jer. xxxi. 4)—**and with harp?** For a description of the *kinnor* see ch. iv. 21. **And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons** (*i. e.* the children of Leah and Rachel) **and my daughters?** It is perhaps judging Laban too severely to pronounce this complete hypocrisy and cant (Alford, Bush, Candlish, Gerlach), but equally wide of the truth is it to see in Laban's conduct nothing but generosity of feeling (Kalisch); probably there was a mixture of both paternal affection and crafty dissimulation (Delitzsch). **Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.** The charge of folly in Old Testament Scriptures commonly carries with it an imputation of wrong-doing (cf. 1 Sam. xiii. 13; 2 Sam. xxiv. 10). **It is in the power of my hand**—so the phrase יֶשׁ־לְאֵל יָדִי (cf. Deut. xxviii. 32; Neh. v. 5; Micah ii. 1) is rendered by competent authorities (Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Murphy, *et alii*), with which agree ἰσχύει ἡ χείρ μου (LXX.), and *valet manus mea* (Vulgate), though the translation "My hand is for God," *i. e.* my hand serves me as God (cf. Job xii. 6; Hab. i. 11), is by some preferred (Keil, Knobel, Jacobus)—**to do you hurt: but the God of your father**—the use of this expression can be rightly regarded neither as a proof of Elohistic authorship (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, Davidson) nor as a sign of Laban's spiritual degeneracy (Hengstenberg, Wordsworth), since it is practically equivalent to Jehovah (*vide* ch. xxviii. 13), but is probably to be viewed as a play upon the sound and sense of the preceding clause, as thus:—"It is in the El of my hand to do you evil, but the Elohim of your father spake to me." Another instance of this play upon the sound and sense is to be found in vers. 19, 20—"Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's; and Jacob stole the heart of Laban the Syrian" (cf. Quarry on Genesis, p. 498)—**spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob**—literally, *guard or keep thee for thyself* (the pleon. pron. being added *ut supra*, ver. 24) *from speaking with Jacob*—**either good or bad** (*vide* on ver. 24). **And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone** (literally, *going thou didst go* = thou hast indeed gone), **because thou sore longedst after thy father's house** (literally, *because desiring thou didst desire.* The verb כָּסַף, to be pale (whence כֶּסֶף, silver, so called from its pale colour), expresses the idea of pining away and languishing through strong inward longing), **yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?** Laban had probably gone to consult his teraphim and so discovered their loss. Augustine calls attention to this as the first Scripture reference to heathen gods, and Calvin probably supplies the right explanation of the sense in which they were so styled by Laban, *non quia deitatem illic putaret esse inclusam,*

sed quia in honorem deorum imagines illas colebat; vel potius quod Deo sacra facturus, vertebat se ad illas imagines (cf. Exod. xxxii. 4; 1 Kings xii. 28). "This complaint of Laban, that his 'gods were stolen,' showeth the vanity of such idolatry" (Ainsworth). Cf. Judges vi. 31; xvi. 24; Jer. x. 5, 11, 15.

Vers. 31, 32.—**And Jacob answered**—"in an able and powerful speech" (Kalisch)—**and said to Laban** (replying to his first interrogation as to why Jacob had stolen away unawares), **Because I was afraid**: **for I said** (*sc.* to myself), **Peradventure** (literally, *lest*, i. e. I must depart without informing thee *lest*) **thou wouldest** (or shouldest) **take by force**—the verb signifies to strip off as skin from flesh (*vide* Mic. iii. 2), and hence to forcibly remove—**thy daughters from me** (after which, in response to Laban's question about his stolen gods, he proceeds). **With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live.** If Jacob meant he shall not live, but I will slay him with mine own hand (Aben Ezra), let God destroy him (Abarbanel), I give him up to thee to put to death (Rosenmüller), let him instantly die (Drusius), he was guilty of great unadvisedness in speech. Accordingly, the import of his words has been mollified by regarding them simply as a prediction, "he will not live," *i. e.* he will die before his time (Jonathan), a prediction which, the Rabbins note, was fulfilled in Rachel (*vide* ch. xxxv. 16, 18); or by connecting them with clause following, "he will not live before our brethren," *i. e.* let him be henceforth cut off from the society of his kinsmen (LXX., Bush). Yet, even as thus explained, the language of Jacob was precipitate, since he ought first to have inquired at his wives and children before pronouncing so emphatically on a matter of which he was entirely ignorant (Calvin). **Before our brethren**—not Jacob's sons, but Laban's kinsmen (ver. 23)—**discern thou**—literally, *examine closely for thyself*, the hiph. of נָכַר (to be strange) meaning to press strongly into a thing, *i. e.* to perceive it by finding out its distinguishing characteristics (*vide* Fürst, *sub voce*)—**what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For** (literally, *and*) **Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them**—otherwise he would have spoken with less heat and more caution.

Ver. 33.—**And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maid-servants' tents**;—the clause affords an interesting glimpse into the manners of the times, showing that not only husbands and wives, but also wives among themselves, possessed separate establishments)—**but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent** (he probably commenced with Jacob's and those of the hand-maids, and afterwards passed into Leah's), **and entered into Rachel's tent**—last, because she was the favourite. Cf. ch. xxxiii. 2, in which a similar partiality towards Rachel is exhibited by Jacob (*vide* Thomson's 'Land and Book,' i. 370).

Ver. 34.—**Now Rachel had taken the images** (teraphim), **and put them in the camel's furniture**,—the camel's furniture was not *stramenta cameli* (Vulgate), "the camel's straw" (Luther), but the camel's saddle (LXX., Onkelos, Syriac, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, and others), here called כַּר, from כָּרַר, an unused root signifying either to go round in a circle, hence to run (Gesenius), or to be firmly wound together, hence to be puffed up as a bolster (Fürst). The woman's riding-saddle was commonly made of wicker-work and had the appearance of a basket or cradle. It was usually covered with carpet, and protected against wind, rain, and sun by means of a canopy and curtains, while light was admitted by openings in the side (cf. Gesenius, *sub voce;* Kalisch *in loco*). "That which is now customary among the Arabs consists of a large closed basket-work, with a place for sitting and reclining, and a window at the side; one of this kind hangs on each side of the camel" (Gerlach)—**and sat upon them.** "To us the picture of Rachel seated upon the camel furniture is true to life, for we have often seen its counterpart. The saddle-bags and cushions which were to be set upon the camel lay piled on the floor, while she sat upon them" (Van Lennep, quoted by Inglis, p. 254). **And Laban searched**—the word means to feel out or explore with the hands (cf. ch. xxvii. 12; Job xii. 25)—**all the tent, but found** them **not.**

Ver. 35.—**And she said to her father,**—"covering theft by subtlety and untruth" (Kalisch), and thus proving herself a true daughter of Laban, as well as showing with how much imperfection her religious character was tainted—**Let it not displease my lord**—literally, *let it not burn with anger* (יִחַר, from חָרָה, to glow, to burn) *in the eyes of my lord* (Adoni)—**that I cannot rise up before thee**;—Oriental politeness required children to rise up in the presence of their parents (*vide* Levit. xix. 32; and cf. 1 Kings ii. 19). Hence Rachel's apology was not unnecessary—**for the custom of women**—(literally, *the way of women;* a periphrasis for menstruation (cf. ch. xviii. 11) which, under the law, required females, as ceremonially unclean, to be put apart (Levit. xv. 19). That, prior to the law, this particular statute concerning women was in force among the Aramæans appears from the present instance; and that it was not exclusively Jewish, but shared in by other nations of antiquity, is the opinion

of the best authorities (*vide* Kurtz, 'History of the Old Covenant,' § 79; 'Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament,' § 218; Keil *in loco;* both of whom quote Bähr's 'Symbolik of the Mosaic Cultus,' ii. 466). Roberts mentions that under similar circumstances with Rachel no one in India goes to the temple or any religious ceremony ('Oriental Illustrations,' p. 37)—**is upon me.** It is just possible Rachel may have been speaking the exact truth, though the probability is she was guilty of fabrication. **And he searched** (everywhere except among the camel's furniture, partly from fear of defilement, but chiefly as regarding it impossible that Rachel in her then state would sit upon his gods), **but found not the images** (teraphim). The three times repeated phrase "he found not," emphasises the completeness of Laban's deception.

Vers. 36—42.—**And Jacob was wroth,**—literally, *and it burned, sc.* with indignation (same word as used by Rachel, ver. 35), *to Jacob,* i. e. he was infuriated at what he believed to be Laban's unjustifiable insinuation about his lost teraphim—**and chode**—or contended; the fundamental signification of the root, ריב or רוּב, being to seize or tear, *e. g.* the hair, hence to strive with the hands (Deut. xxxiii. 7), or with words (Ps. ciii. 9). The two verbs, וַיִּחַר and וַיָּרֶב, give a vivid representation of the exasperation which Jacob felt—**with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban,**—in words characterised by "verbosity and self-glorification" (Kalisch), or "acute sensibility and elevated self-consciousness" (Delitzsch, Keil), according as one inclines to an unfavourable or favourable view of Jacob's character—**What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?** The intensity of Jacob's feeling imparts to his language a rythmical movement, and leads to the selection of poetical forms of expression, such as דָּלַק אַחֲרֵי, to burn after, in the sense of fiercely persecuting, which occurs again only in 1 Sam. xvii. 53 (*vide* Gesenius and Fürst, *sub voce;* and cf. Keil, *in loco*), causing the reader at times to catch "the dance and music of actual verse" (Ewald). **Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff,**—literally (*sc.* What is my sin) *that thou hast felt all my articles* (LXX., Kalisch)? the clause being co-ordinate with the preceding; though by others כִּי is taken as equivalent to כַּאֲשֶׁר, *quando quidem,* since (A. V., Ainsworth), or *quando,* when (Calvin, Murphy)—**what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren** (*i. e.* Laban's kinsmen who accompanied him, who were also of necessity kinsmen to Jacob), **that they may judge betwixt us both**—which of us has injured the other. **This twenty years have I been with thee** (*vide infra,* ver. 41); **thy ewes** (רָחֵל, a ewe, whence Rachel) **and thy she goats**—עֵז, a she-goat; cf. Sanscrit, *adsha,* a he-goat; *adshâ,* a she-goat; Goth., *gáitsa;* Anglo-Saxon, *gât;* German, *geis;* Greek, *aἴξ*; Turkish, *gieik* (Gesenius, *sub voce*)—**have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.** Roberts says that the people of the East do not eat female sheep except when sterile, and that it would be considered folly and prodigality in the extreme to eat that which has the power of producing more (*vide* 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 37). **That which was torn of beasts** (טְרֵפָה, a coll. fem., from טָרַף, to tear in pieces, meaning that which is torn in pieces, hence cattle destroyed by wild beasts) **I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it;**—אֲחַטֶּנָּה, literally, *I made expiation for it,* the piel of חָטָא, signifying to make atonement for a thing by sacrifice (Levit. ix. 15), or by compensation, as here; hence equivalent to "I bare the loss of it" (Rashi, Fürst), or ἐγὼ ἀπετίννυον (LXX.), or, perhaps, "I will bear the loss of it, or pay it back" (Kalisch)—**of my hand didst thou require it,**—otherwise, "of my hand require it" (Kalisch)—whether **stolen by day, or stolen by night.** Without adhering literally to the text, the LXX. give the sense of this and the preceding clause as being, "From my own I paid back the stolen by day and the stolen by night." Thus **I was;** (*i. e.* I was in this condition that) **in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night.** קֶרַח, ice, so called from its smoothness, hence cold. The alternation of heat and cold in many eastern countries is very great and severely felt by shepherds, travellers, and watchmen, who require to pass the night in the open air, and who in consequence are often obliged to wear clothes lined with skins (cf. Ps. cxxi. 6; Jer. xxxvi. 30). "The thermometer at 24° Fahr. at night, a lump of solid ice in our basins in the morning, and then the scorching heat of the day drawing up the moisture, made the neighbourhood, convenient as it was, rather a fever-trap, and premonitory symptoms warned us to move" (Tristram, 'The Land of Moab,' p. 217). "The night air at Josiza was keen and cold; indeed there was a sharp frost, and ice appeared on all the little pools about the camp" (Thomson, 'The Land and the Book,' p. 364). "Does a master reprove his servant for being idle, he will ask, 'What can I do? the heat eats me up by day, and the cold eats me up by night'" (Roberts' 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 37; cf. Paxton's 'Illustrations,' vol. i. p. 30). **And my sleep departed from mine eyes.** "Syrian shepherds were compelled to watch their flocks often both night

and day, and for a whole month together, and repair into long plains and deserts without any shelter; and when reduced to this incessant labour, they were besides chilled by the piercing cold of the morning, and scorched by the succeeding heats of a flaming sun, the opposite action of which often swells and chafes their lips and face" (Paxton's 'Illustrations of Scripture,' vol. i. p. 30). **Thus have I been**—literally, *this to me* (or for myself, *vide infra*)—**twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle.** The majority of expositors understand the twenty years referred to in ver. 38 to be the same as the twenty spoken of here as consisting of fourteen and six. Dr. Kennicott, regarding the twenty years of ver. 38 as having intervened between the fourteen and the six of ver. 41, makes the entire period of Jacob's sojourn in Padan-aram to have been forty years. In support of this he contends —(1) that the particle זֶה, twice repeated (in ver. 38 and in ver. 41), may be legitimately rendered, "This (one) twenty years I was with thee" (ver. 38), *i. e.* taking care of thy flocks; and "this for myself (another) twenty years in thy house," *i. e.* serving for thy daughters and thy cattle (cf. Exod. xiv. 20; Job xxi. 23, 25; Eccles. vi. 5); (2) that on this hypothesis more time is afforded for the birth of Jacob's family, viz. twenty-seven years instead of seven; and (3) that it relieves the narrative of certain grave chronological difficulties in connection with Judah and his family, which, on the supposition of the shorter period, subsequently emerge, such as that Judah and his sons must have been quite children when they married (*vide* ch. xxxviii. 1—11). But, on the other hand, in favour of the accepted chronology it may be urged—(1) that the interposition of a second twenty years in the middle of the first is unnatural; (2) that, though legitimate, the proposed rendering of זֶה does not at first sight suggest itself as that which Jacob intended; (3) that it is not impossible for Jacob's family to have been born in the short space of seven years (*vide* ch. xxvii. 1; xxx. 35); (4) that in reality the difficulties connected with Judah and his sons are not removed by the hypothesis of a forty years' sojourn in Padan-aram any more than by a sojourn of only twenty years, since Judah must have married either after the sale of Joseph, in which case only twenty-two years remain for the birth and marriage of Er and Onan, for Pharez and Zarah, Judah's children by Tamar, to grow to manhood, and for Pharez to have two sons, Hezron and Hamul, before descending to Egypt, unless indeed, as Kürtz supposes, Judah's grandchildren were born in Egypt; or before the sale of Joseph—indeed, if Hezron and Hamul were born in Canaan, before the birth of Joseph, *i. e.* while Judah was yet in Padan-aram, which is contrary to the narrative (*vide* ch. xxxviii. 1, 2). For these reasons, though adopted by some excellent authorities (Bishop Horsley, Adam Clarke, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis), the computation of Dr. Kennicott does not appear of sufficient weight to set aside the ordinary reckoning, which is followed by interpreters of equal credit (Keil, Kalisch, Kürtz, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth). **And thou hast changed my wages ten times** (*vide* ver. 7). **Except** (לוּלֵי, if not, *i. e.* unless, introducing the protasis of the sentence) **the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac,**—*i. e.* the object of Isaac's fear, not "terror" (Oort and Kuenen, *vide* 'The Bible for Young People,' vol. i. p. 243), viz. God; פַּחַד being used metonymically of that which inspires reverence or fear, like *σέβας* and *σέβασμα*. The entire clause is a periphrasis for Jehovah of ver. 3, which is usually ascribed to the Jehovist, while the present verse belongs, it is alleged, to the fundamental document—**had been with**—or, for (cf. Ps. cxxiv. 1, 2)—**me** (during the whole period of my sojurn in Padan-aram, but especially during the last six years), **surely** (כִּי, then, commencing the apodosis) **thou hadst sent me away now empty** (as by thy stratagem in changing my wages thou didst design; but) **God hath seen mine affliction** (cf. ch. xxix. 32; Exod. iii. 7) **and the labour**—especially that which is wearisome, from a root signifying to toil with effort so as to become fatiguing (cf. Job xxxix. 11) —**of my hands, and rebuked**—*i. e.* reproved, *sc.* thee, as in ch. xxi. 25 (LXX., Vulgate, A. V., Calvin, Ainsworth, Lange, Kalisch, and others); or judged, *sc.* it, *i. e.* mine affliction, in the sense of pronouncing an opinion or verdict on it, as in 1 Chron. xii. 17 (Keil, Murphy); or proved, *sc.* it, viz. that he had seen my affliction (Dathius, Poole); or decided, *sc.* betwixt us, as in ver. 37 (Fürst, Gesenius) thee **yesternight.**

Vers. 43, 44.—**And Laban answered and said unto Jacob,**—neither receiving Jacob's torrent of invective with affected meekness (Candlish), nor proving himself to be completely reformed by the angry recriminations of his "callous and hardened" son-in-law (Kalisch); but perhaps simply owning the truth of Jacob's words, and recognising that he had no just ground of complaint (Calvin), as well as touched in his paternal affections by the sight of his daughters, from whom he felt that he was about to part for ever—**These daughters**—literally, *the daughters* (there)—are **my daughters, and these** (literally, *the*) **children are my children, and** these (literally,

the) **cattle are my cattle; and all that thou seest is mine.** Not as reminding Jacob that he had still a legal claim to his (Jacob's) wives and possessions (Candlish), or at least possessions (Kalisch), though prepared to waive it, but rather as acknowledging that in doing injury to Jacob he would only be proceeding against his own flesh and blood (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Gerlach, Alford). **And what can I do this day unto these my daughters,**—literally, *and as for* (or to) *my daughters, what can I do to these this day?* The LXX., connecting "and to my daughters" with what precedes, reads, καὶ πάντα ὅσα σὺ ὁρᾷς, ἐμά ἐστι, καὶ τῶν θυγατέρων μου—**or unto their children which they have born?**—*i. e.* why should I do anything unto them? *An ego in viscera mea sævirem?* (Calvin)—**Now therefore**—literally, *and now*, νῦν οὖν (LXX.)—**come thou,**—לְכָה, imper. of יָלַךְ = age, go to, come now (cf. ch. xix. 32)—**let us make a covenant,**—literally, *let us cut a covenant*, an expression which, according to partitionists (Tuch, Stähelin, Delitzsch, *et alii*), is not used by the Elohist until after Exod. xxiv. 8; and yet by all such authorities the present verse is assigned to the Elohist (cf. Keil's 'Introduction,' part I. § ii., div. i. § 27)—**I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 22—44.—*Laban's pursuit of Jacob.* I. THE HOSTILE PREPARATION. Learning of his son-in-law's departure, Laban at once determines on pursuit; not alone for the purpose of recovering his household gods, but chiefly with the view of wreaking his pent-up vengeance on Jacob, whom he now regarded as the spoiler of his fortunes, and if possible to capture and detain the much-coveted flocks and herds which he considered had been practically stolen by his nephew. Mustering his kinsmen by either force or fraud,—by command enjoining those belonging to his household, and by misrepresentation probably beguiling such as were independent of his authority,—he loses not a moment, but starts upon the trail of the fugitives. Worldly men are seldom slow in seeking to repair their lost fortunes, and angry men are seldom laggard in exacting revenge. It is only God's vengeance that is slow-footed.

II. THE DIVINE INTERPOSITION. Six days the wrathful Laban follows in pursuit of Jacob, and now the distance of one day is all that parts him from the fugitives. In a dream by night he is warned by Elohim to speak neither good nor bad to Jacob. The incident reminds us of the Divine superintendence of mundane affairs in general, and of God's care for his people in particular; of the access which God ever has to the minds of his dependent creatures, and of the many different ways in which he can communicate his will; of his ability at all times to restrain the wrath of wicked men, and check the hands of evil-doers, who meditate the spoiling of his Church or the persecution of his saints.

III. THE STORMY INTERVIEW. 1. *The pompous harangue of Laban.* Laban gives way to—(1) Passionate reproach; charging Jacob with having clandestinely departed from his service and violently carried off his daughters, in the first of which Jacob did nothing wrong, while the second was a pure exaggeration (*vide* ver. 16). (2) Hypocritical affection; declaring that Jacob, had he, Laban, only known, might have been sent away with public demonstrations of rejoicing, while Rachel and Leah might have carried with them a parent's kiss, if not a father's blessing. But if Jacob's leave-taking would in any way have excited Laban's jubilation, it is doubtful if this would not have been traceable less to Laban's regard for his son-in-law than to Laban's anxiety about his flocks, which, in the absence of the spoiler, he might hope would become prolific as before; while as for Laban's love for his daughters, one might fairly claim indemnity for suspecting an affection so recent in its origin, and so palpably contradicted by his previous behaviour. (3) Boastful assertion; passing on, like all weak natures who love to be considered formidable, to brag about his power to inflict injury on Jacob (ver. 29), and to hint that he only forbears to do so out of respect for God, who had appeared to him on the previous night. (4) Direct accusation; ere he closes his oration, deliberately impeaching Jacob with having abstracted his teraphim. 2. *The ingenuous response of Jacob.* In this are discernible virtues worthy of imitation, if also infirmities deserving reprobation. If Jacob's candour in declaring the reasons of his flight (ver. 31) and willingness to restore to Laban whatever property belonged to him (ver. 32) are examples to be

copied, on the other hand, the over-confident assertion that no one had Laban's gods, and the over-hasty imprecation on any who should be found possessing them, are not to be commended.

IV. THE FRUITLESS SEARCH. 1. *The missing gods.* On the nature, probable origin, and uses of the teraphim see Exposition, ver. 19. The existence of these silver or wooden images in Laban's tent was a proof of the religious declension, if not complete apostasy, of this branch of the family of Terah. Scripture never represents idolatry as an upward effort of the human heart, as a further development in the onward evolution of the soul (Sir J. Lubbock on the 'Origin of Civilisation,' p. 256); but always as a deterioration, or a retrogression, or a falling away of the human spirit from its rightful allegiance. The loss of Laban's manufactured deities was a ridiculous commentary on the folly of worshipping or trusting in a god that could be stolen—a complete *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole superstructure of idolatry (cf. 1 Kings xviii. 27; Ps. cxv. 4, 8; Isa. xliv. 19; xlvi. 6, 7; Jer. x. 5). 2. *The anxious devotee.* Invited by Jacob to make a search for his lost teraphim, Laban begins with Jacob's tent, then with the tents of Bilhah and Zilpah, after which he passes into Leah's, and finally comes to Rachel's; but everywhere his efforts to recover his gods are defeated. What a spectacle of infinite humour, if it were not rather of ineffable sadness—a man seeking for his lost gods! The gospel presents us with the opposite picture—the ever-present God seeking for his lost children. 3. *The lying daughter.* If the conduct of Rachel in carrying off the images of her father was open to serious question (*vide* Exposition, ver. 19), her behaviour towards her father in the tent was utterly inexcusable. Even if she spoke the truth in describing her condition, she was guilty of bare-faced deception. This particular passage in Rachel's history is painfully suggestive of the disastrous results of worldliness and irreligion in the training of children. Laban's craft and Laban's superstition had both been factors in Rachel's education. 4. *The deceived parent.* Worse than being disappointed in his gods, Laban was dishonoured by his daughter. But what else could he expect? Laban was only reaping as he had sowed. Marvellous and appropriate are God's providential retributions.

V. THE PASSIONATE INVECTIVE. It was now Jacob's turn to pour out the vials of his wrath upon Laban, and certainly it burned all the hotter because of its previous suppression. 1. He *upbraids* Laban with the unreasonableness of his persecution (ver. 36). 2. He *taunts* Laban with the fruitlessness of his search (ver. 37). 3. He *reminds* Laban of the faithful service he had given for twenty years (vers. 38—41). 4. He *recalls* the crafty attempts to defraud him of which Laban had been guilty (ver. 41). 5. He *assures* Laban that it was God's gracious care, and neither his honesty nor affection, that had prevented him from being that day a poor man instead of a rich emir (ver. 42). 6. He somewhat fiercely *bids* Laban accept the rebuke which God had addressed to him the previous night.

VI. THE AMICABLE SETTLEMENT. Doubtless much to Jacob's surprise, the wrath of Laban all at once subsided, and a proposal came from him to bury past animosities, to strike a covenant of friendship with one another, and to part in peace. The seven days' journey, affording time for reflection; the Divine interposition, inspiring him with fear; the mortification resulting from his fruitless search, convincing him that he had really overstepped the bounds of moderation in accusing Jacob; the voice of conscience within his breast re-echoing the words of Jacob, and declaring them to be true; and perhaps the sight of his daughters at last touching a chord in the old man's heart;—all these may have contributed to this unexpected collapse in Laban; but whether or not, Jacob, as became him, cordially assented to the proposition.

Lessons:—1. The reality of God's care for his people—illustrated by the appearances of Elohim to Jacob and to Laban. 2. The miserable outcome of a worldly life—exemplified in Laban. 3. The efficacy of a soft answer in turning away wrath—proved by Jacob's first response. 4. The difficulty of restraining angry speech within just bounds—exemplified by both. 5. The folly of idolatry, as seen in Laban's lost teraphim. 6. The evil fruits of bad parental training, as they appear in Rachel. 7. The proper way of ending quarrels—exhibited by Laban and Jacob in their covenant agreement.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 45.—**And Jacob took a stone, and set it up** *for* **a pillar**—or *Matzebah*, as a memorial or witness of the covenant about to be formed (ver. 52); a different transaction from the piling of the stone-heap next referred to (cf. ch. xxviii. 18; Josh. xxiv. 27).

Ver. 46. — **And Jacob said unto his brethren,** — Laban's kinsmen and his own (*vide* ver. 37) — **Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap** :—*Gal*, from *Galal*, to roll, to move in a circle, probably signified a circular cairn, to be used not as a seat (Gerlach), but as an altar (ver. 54), a witness (ver. 48), and a table (ver. 54), since it is added—**and they did eat there**—not immediately (Lange), but afterwards, on the conclusion of the covenant (ver. 54)—**upon the heap.**

Ver. 47. — **And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha** : — A Chaldaic term signifying "Heap of testimony," βουνὸς τῆς μαρτυρίας (LXX.); *tumulum testis* (Vulgate) — **but Jacob called it Galeed**—compounded of *Gal* and *'ed* and meaning, like the corresponding Aramaic term used by Laban, "Heap of witness," βουνὸς μάρτυς (LXX.); *acervum testimonii* (Vulgate). "It is scarcely possible to doubt," says Kalisch, "that an important historical fact," relating to the primitive language of the patriarchs, "is concealed in this part of the narrative;" but whether that fact was that Aramaic, Syriac, or Chaldee was the mother-tongue of the family of Nahor, while Hebrew was acquired by Abraham in Canaan (Bleek, Delitzsch, Keil), or that Laban had deviated from the original speech of his ancestors (Jerome, Augustine), or that Laban and Jacob both used the same language with some growing dialectic differences (Gosman in Lange, Inglis), Laban simply on this occasion giving the heap a name which would be known to the inhabitants of the district (Wordsworth), seems impossible to determine with certainty. The most that can be reasonably inferred from the term *Jegar-sahadutha* is that Aramaic was the language of Mesopotamia (Rosenmüller); besides this expression there is no other evidence that Laban and Jacob conversed in different dialects; while it is certain that the word Mizpah, which was probably also spoken by Laban, is not Chaldee or Aramaic but Hebrew.

Vers. 48—50.—**And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day.** The historian adding — **Therefore was the name of it called** (originally by Jacob, and afterwards by the Israelites from this transaction) **Galeed** (*vide* on ver. 21). The stony character of the region may have suggested the designation. **And Mizpah**; — watch-tower, from Tsaphah, to watch. Mizpah afterwards became the site of a town in the district of Gilead (Judges x. 17; xi. 11, 19, 34); which received its name, as the historian intimates, from the pile of witness erected by Laban and his kinsmen, and was later celebrated as the residence of Jephthah (Judges xi. 34) and the seat of the sanctuary (Judges xi. 11). Ewald supposes that the mound (Galeed) and the watch tower (Mizpah) were different objects, and that the meaning of the (so-called) legend is that, while the former (the mountain) was piled up by Jacob and his people, the latter (now the city and fortress of Mizpah on one of the heights of Gilead) was constructed by Laban and his followers (*vide* 'History of Israel,' vol. i. p. 347); but the "grotesqueness" of this interpretation of the Hebrew story is its best refutation—**for he** (*i. e.* Laban) **said, The Lord**—Jehovah; a proof that vers. 49, 50 are a Jehovistic interpolation (Tuch, Bleek, Colenso, Kalisch); an indication of their being a subsequent insertion, though not warranting the inference that the entire history is a complication (Keil); a sign that henceforth Laban regarded Jehovah as the representative of his rights (Lange); but probably only a token that Laban, recognising Jehovah as the only name that would bind the conscience of Jacob (Hengstenberg, Quarry), had for the moment adopted Jacob's theology ('Speaker's Commentary'), but only in self-defence (Wordsworth) — **watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another** — literally, *a man from his companion.* **If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take** other **wives beside my daughters** (Laban's concern for his daughters, though hitherto not conspicuous, may, in the hour of parting from them, have been real: his language shows that he was not quite at ease as to Jacob's integrity. Perhaps the remembrance that he had been the cause of Jacob's taking two wives made him anxious to secure that Jacob should not improve upon his evil instructions), **no man is with us**;—either then they stood apart from Laban's clan followers (Inglis); or his meaning was that when widely separated there would be no one to judge betwixt them, or perhaps even to observe them (Rosenmüller), but—**see, God** (Elohim in contrast to man) **is witness betwixt me and thee.**

Ver. 51—53.—**And Laban said to Jacob,** —according to Ewald the last narrator has transposed the names of Laban and Jacob (*vide* 'History of Israel,' vol. i. p. 346)— **Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast** (same word as in ver. 45.

The Arabic version and Samaritan text read *yaritha*, thou hast erected, instead of *yarithi*, I have erected or cast up) **betwixt me and thee; this heap be witness, and** this **pillar be witness, that** (literally, *if*, here = *that*) **I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar** (Laban bound himself never to pass over the heap which he had erected as his witness; whereas Jacob was required to swear that he would never cross the pillar and the pile, both of which were witnesses for him) **unto me, for harm.** The emphatic word closes the sentence. **The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge**—the verb is plural, either because Laban regarded the Elohim of Nahor as different from the Elohim of Abraham (Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or because, though acknowledging only one Elohim, he viewed him as maintaining several and distinct relations to the persons named (cf. Quarry, p. 499)—**betwixt us.** Laban here invokes his own hereditary Elohim, the Elohim of Abraham's father, to guard his rights and interests under the newly-formed covenant; while Jacob in his adjuration appeals to the Elohim of Abraham's son. **And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac** (*vide supra*, ver. 42).

Ver. 54.—**Then Jacob offered sacrifice**—literally, *slew a slaying*, in ratification of the covenant—**upon the mount, and called his brethren** (Laban's followers, who may have withdrawn to a distance during the interview) **to eat bread.** The sacrificial meal afterwards became an integral part of the Hebrew ritual (Exod. xxiv. 3—8; xxix. 27, 28; Levit. x. 14, 15). **And they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.**

Vers. 55.—**And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters,**—*i. e.* Rachel and Leah and their children. It does not appear that Laban kissed Jacob on taking final leave of him as he did on first meeting him (ch. xxix. 39)—**and blessed them** (cf. ch. xxiv. 60; xxviii. 1): **and Laban departed, and returned unto his place**—Padan-aram (cf. ch. xviii. 33; xxx. 25).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 45—55.—*Galeed and Mizpah, or the covenant of peace.* I. THE COVENANT MEMORIALS. 1. *The pillar of remembrance.* The erection of the stone slab appears to have been the act of Jacob alone, and to have been designed to commemorate the important transaction about to be entered into with Laban. It is well to keep note of those engagements we make with our fellow-men in order to their punctual fulfilment; much more of those we make with God. It does not appear that any name was given to the column, and this may have been because it was intended chiefly for himself. 2. *The pile of witness.* This was the work both of Laban and Jacob, which they conjointly performed through the instrumentality of their brethren; and being of the nature of a public monument, it was further characterised by a name—Laban calling it Jegar-sahadutha, and Jacob styling it Galeed, both expressions signifying heap of witness, and perhaps both of them naming it Mizpah, or watchtower, from the nature of the oath which they both took on the occasion. Men who are truly sincere in their covenant engagements are never afraid to bind themselves by public attestations of their good faith, though it is certain that of all men these least require to be so bound.

II. THE COVENANT WORDS. 1. *The solemn engagements.* On the one hand Laban undertakes never to pass the stone heap on Gilead to do injury to Jacob—not mentioning the pillar, which was purely of Jacob's construction, and therefore supposed to have a religious significance solely for Jacob; and on the other hand Jacob records his vow never to cross the pillar and the pile to inflict wrong on Laban, and in addition, as Laban might be injured in his daughters without crossing the forbidden line, never to afflict Rachel and Leah by taking other wives besides them. The engagement on both sides is to abstain from doing injury of any sort to each other; and to this all men are bound by both natural and revealed religion without the formality of an oath; and much more than other men, are Christians taken bound by God's grace and Christ's blood to live peaceably with all men and be at peace amongst themselves. 2. *The impressive oaths.* If it is dubious whether Laban appealed to God or only to the stone-heap to witness his sincerity in promising not to harm Jacob, it is certain that he appealed to God to keep a strict eye on Jacob (ver. 49), and in a semi-superstitious way united the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their

fathers, to judge between them. Jacob does not mention either pile or pillar, but swears by the fear of his father Isaac.

III. THE COVENANT ACTIONS. 1. *The sacrifice.* The offering of sacrifice was essential to the formation of a covenant. As between God and man, it virtually proclaimed that God could enter into amicable relations with sinful man only on the basis of an atonement. As between man and man, it was equivalent to an acknowledgment by the covenanting parties that both required to be covered with the blood of propitiation. That Jacob, and not Laban, offered sacrifice intimates that these truths were already in some degree appreciated by Jacob, though possibly they were not understood by Laban. 2. *The feast.* In making this feast Jacob may only have been following the example of his father Isaac, who similarly entertained Abimelech and his statesmen at Beersheba on the occasion of the treaty which was there formed between them; but the sacrificial feast afterwards became an important element in the Mosaic cultus, and was designed to express the idea of house and table fellowship between the covenanting parties.

IV. THE COVENANT RESULTS. 1. *The kiss of reconciliation.* It is not certain that Laban kissed Jacob when he prepared for his departure in the morning; perhaps that was too much to expect; but he kissed Rachel and Leah and their children. It was a sign of forgiveness not alone to them, but through them also to Jacob. 2. *The paternal benediction.* Laban, whose better nature appears to have returned as the result of the covenant, or of the feast, or of the contemplated parting with his daughters, poured out his feelings in a farewell blessing on their heads. It is the last we hear or see of Laban in the Scripture narrative. Let us hope it was the revival of early kindness and piety in the old man's heart.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 51—55.—*Final covenant between Jacob and Laban.* I. ENTIRE SEPARATION FROM TEMPTATION IS THE ONLY SAFETY. Very imperfect knowledge in the Mesopotamian family. Rachel's theft of the household gods a sign of both moral and spiritual deficiency. The religion of Jacob and his descendants must be preserved from contamination. Intercourse with the unenlightened and unsanctified, though necessary for a time and in some degree, must not be suffered to obscure the higher light, or surround us with practical entanglements which hinder our faithfulness to God.

II. WHEREVER THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS FEEBLE IT IS WELL THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOLEMN PUBLIC ACTS OF COVENANT AND TESTIMONY. We want the Galeed and the Mizpah, the heap of witness and the watch-tower of faith. Many united together in the covenant, and thus became witnesses in whose presence the oath was taken. We are helped to faithfulness by the publicity of our vows. But the higher the spiritual life, the less we shall call in material things to support it. Jacob with Laban is not the true Jacob. All dependence upon the symbol and rite is more or less compromise.

III. THE CONTACT OF THE HIGHER FORM OF RELIGION WITH THE LOWER ONE, OF THE MEANS OF PREPARING THE WORLD FOR THE TRUTH. Laban and his family types of the lower order of religious knowledge and life. The covenant between the father-in-law and son-in-law in the name of the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor points to a rising light in the Mesopotamian family. We may be sure that the influence of Christianity will be supreme wherever it is brought face to face with men's religions. That influence may be embodied in matters of common life, in covenants between man and man, in laws and commercial regulations and social arrangements.

IV. THE SEED OF THE DIVINE LIFE IS PLANTED IN THE SOIL OF NATURE, BUT REVEALS ITS SUPERIORITY TO NATURE BY BRINGING ALL THINGS AND MEN INTO SUBJECTION TO ITSELF. Jacob, Rachel, and afterwards Joseph, present to the Spirit of God elements of character which require both elevation and renovation. The grace is given. On a natural foundation inherited from others God rears by his grace a lofty structure. The crafty and the thoughtful are often nearly allied. It is one of the spiritual dangers to which specially energetic and subtle minds are exposed, that they may so easily fall into an abuse of their superior mental quickness to the injury of their

moral purity and simplicity. Jacob and Laban making their covenant together, and erecting their witnessing monuments, are another illustration of the homage which even very imperfect characters pay to the God of truth. They appeal to him, and they do so in the presence of a world which they know will justify God, and not the sinner. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of Isaac, judged between them. Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and invited his brethren to a sacrificial banquet; and it was in that atmosphere of mingled reverence for God and human affection that the heir of the covenant bade farewell to all that held him in restraint, and set his face once more towards the land of promise.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Ver. 1.— **And Jacob** (after Laban's departure) **went on his way** (from Galeed and Mizpah, in a southerly direction towards the Jabbok), **and the angels of God**—literally, *the messengers of Elohim*, not chance travellers who informed him of Esau's being in the vicinity (Abarbanel), but angels (cf. Ps. civ. 4)—**met him.** Not necessarily came in an opposite direction, *fuerunt ei obviam* (Vulgate), but simply fell in with him, lighted on him as in ch. xxviii. 11, *σῦνήντησαν αὐτῷ* (LXX.), forgathered with him (Scottish); but whether this was in a waking vision (Kurtz, Keil, Inglis) or a midnight dream (Hengstenberg) is uncertain, though the two former visions enjoyed by Jacob were at night (cf. ch. xxviii. 12; xxxi. 10). Cajetan, approved by Pererius, translating בּוֹ as "in him," makes it appear that the vision was purely subjective, *non fuisse visionem corporalem, sed internam:* the clause interpolated by the LXX., *καὶ ἀναβλέψας, εἶδε παρεμβολὴν θεοῦ παρμεβεβληκυῖαν*, seems rather to point to an objective manifestation. The appearance of this invisible host may have been designed to celebrate Jacob's triumph over Laban, as after Christ's victory over Satan in the wilderness angels came and ministered unto him (Rupertus, Wordsworth), or to remind him that he owed his deliverance to Divine interposition (Calvin, Bush, Lange), but was more probably intended to assure him of protection in his approaching interview with Esau (Josephus, Chrysostom, Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), and perhaps also to give him welcome in returning home again to Canaan (Kurtz), if not in addition to suggest that his descendants would require to fight for their inheritance (Kalisch).

Ver. 2.—**And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host:**—Mahaneh Elohim; *i. e.* the army (cf. ch. l. 9; Exod. xiv. 24) or camp (1 Sam. xiv. 15; Ps. xxvii. 3) of God, as opposed to the Mahanoth, or bands of Jacob himself (*vide* ver. 7, 10)—**and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.**—*i. e.* Two armies or camps, from the root חָנָה, to decline or bend, and hence to fix oneself down or encamp; meaning either a multitudinous host, reading the dual for a plural (Malvenda), or two bands of angels, one before, welcoming him to Canaan, and another behind, conducting him from Mesopotamia (Jarchi and others), or one on either side to typify the completeness of his protection, as in Ps. xxxiv. 8 (Calvin, Bush, Gerlach, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or, as the best expositors interpret, his own company and the heavenly host (Aben Ezra, Clericus, Dathe, Keil, Lange, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Murphy). Mahanaim, afterwards a distinguished city in the territory of Gad (Josh. xiii. 26), and frequently referred to in subsequent Scripture (2 Sam. ii. 8; xvii. 24, 27; xix. 32; 1 Kings iv. 14), as well as mentioned by Josephus ('Ant.' vii. 9, 8), as a strong and beautiful city, has been identified with Mahneh, a deserted ruin six or seven miles north-west by north of Ajlûn (Mount Gilead), and about twenty miles from the Jabbok (*vide* 'Robinson,' vol. iii. App. 166; and cf. Tristram, 'The Land of Israel,' p. 483); but the narrative appears to say that Mahanaim lay not north of Galeed, but between that place and Jabbok. Hence Porter suggests Gerasa, the most splendid ruin east of the Jordan, and bordering on the Jabbok, as occupying the site of Mahanaim (*vide* Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Mahanaim, and cf. 'Handbook for S. and P.' ii. 311, *seq.*).

Ver. 3. — **And Jacob sent messengers** (with the messengers of Jacob, the messengers of Elohim form a contrast which can scarcely have been accidental) **before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir,**—*vide* on ch. xiv. 6. Seir, nearly equivalent in force to Esau (Ewald), and meaning the rough or bristling mountain (Gesenius), was originally occupied by the Horites, but afterwards became the seat of Esau and his descendants (Deut. ii. 4; 2 Chron. xx. 10), though as yet Esau had not withdrawn from Canaan (ch. xxxvi. 5—8)—**the country** (literally, *plain or level tract* = Padan (*vide* Hosea xii. 13) **of Edom,** as it was afterwards called.

Vers. 4, 5.—**And he commanded them,**

saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus;—the expression "my lord" may have been designed to intimate to Esau that he (Jacob) did not intend to assert that superiority or precedency which had been assigned him by Isaac's blessing (ch. xxvii. 29), at least so far as to claim a share in Isaac's wealth (Calvin, Bush, Gerlach), but was probably due chiefly to the extreme courtesy of the East (Gerlach), or to a desire to conciliate his brother (Keil), or to a feeling of personal contrition for his misbehaviour towards Esau (Kalisch), and perhaps also to a secret apprehension of danger from Esau's approach (Alford, Inglis) — **I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed**—אֵחַר, the fut. Kal. of אָחַר, occurring only here, is a contraction for אֶאֱחַר, like תֹּסֵף for תֹּאסֵף (Ps. civ. 29; *vide* Gesenius, § 68, 2)—**there until now: and I have** (literally, *there are to me, so that I stand in need of no further wealth from either thee or Isaac*) **oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants:**—cf. xii. 16 (Abraham); xxvi. 13, 14 (Isaac) — **and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight** (cf. xxxiii. 8, 15; xxxix. 4; and *vide* vi. 8; xviii. 3).

Ver. 6. **And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee** (*vide* ch. xxxiii. 1), **and four hundred men with him.** That Esau was attended by 400 armed followers was a proof that he had grown to be a powerful chieftain. If the hypothesis be admissible that he had already begun to live by the sword (ch. xxvii. 40), and was now invading the territory of the Horites, which he afterwards occupied (Delitzsch, Keil, Kurtz), it will serve to explain his appearance in the land of Seir, while as yet he had not finally retired from Canaan. That he came with such a formidable force to meet his brother has been set down to personal vanity, or a desire to show how powerful a prince he had become (Lyra, Menochius); to fraternal kindness, which prompted him to do honour to his brother (Poole, Calvin, Clarke), to a distinctly hostile intention (Willet, Ainsworth, Candlish), at least if circumstances should seem to call for vengeance (Keil), though it is probable that Esau's mind, on first hearing of his brother's nearness, was simply excited, and "in that wavering state which the slightest incident might soothe into good will, or rouse into vengeance" (Murphy).

Vers. 7, 8.—**Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed:**—literally, *it was narrow to him;* i. e. he was perplexed. Clearly the impression left on Jacob's mind by the report of his ambassadors was that he had nothing to expect but hostility—**and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;** —according to Gerlach, caravans are frequently divided thus in the present day, and for the same reason as Jacob assigns—**And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.** It is easy to blame Jacob for want of faith in not trusting to God instead of resorting to his own devices (Candlish), but his behaviour in the circumstances evinced great self-possession, *non ita expavefactum fuisse Jacob quin res suas componeret* (Calvin), considerable prudence (Lange), if not exalted chivalry (Candlish), a peaceful disposition which did not wish *vim vi armata repellere* (Rosenmüller), and a truly religious spirit ('Speaker's Commentary'), since in his terror he betakes himself to prayer.

Vers. 9—12.—**And Jacob said,**—the combined beauty and power, humility and boldness, simplicity and sublimity, brevity and comprehensiveness of this prayer, of which Kalisch somewhat hypercritically complains that it ought to have been offered before resorting to the preceding precautions, has been universally recognised—**O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord**—Jacob's invocation is addressed not to Deity in general, but to the living personal Elohim who had taken his fathers Abraham and Isaac into covenant, *i. e.* to Jehovah who had enriched them with promises of which he was the heir, and who had specially appeared unto himself (cf. ch. xxviii. 13; xxxi. 3, 13)—**which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:** —here was a clear indication that Jacob had in faith both obeyed the command and embraced the promise made known to him in Haran—**I am not worthy of the least of** (literally, *I am less than*) **all the mercies, and** (of) **all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;**—the profound humility which these words breathe is a sure indication that the character of Jacob had either undergone a great inward transformation, if that was not experienced twenty years before at Bethel, or had shaken off the moral and spiritual lethargy under which he too manifestly laboured while in the service of Laban—**for with my staff** (*i. e.* possessing nothing but my staff) **I passed over this Jordan** (the Jabbok was situated near, indeed is a tributary of the Jordan); **and now I am become two bands** (or Machanoth). **Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau** (thus passing from thanksgiving to direct petition, brief, explicit, and fervent): **for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me** (*i. e.* my whole clan, as Ishmael, Israel,

Edom signify not individuals, but races), **and the mother with the children.** Literally, *mother upon the children*, a proverbial expression for unsparing cruelty (Rosenmüller, Keil), or complete extirpation (Kalisch), taken from the idea of destroying a bird while sitting upon its young (cf. Hosea x. 14). **And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good,**—literally, *doing good, I will do good to thee* (vide ch. xxviii. 13). Jacob here pleads the Divine promises at Bethel (ch. xxviii. 13—15) and at Haran (ch. xxxi. 3), as an argument why Jehovah should extend to him protection against Esau—conduct at which Tuch is scandalised as "somewhat inaptly reminding God of his commands and promises, and calling upon him to keep his word;" but just this is what God expects his people to do (Isa. xliii. 26), and according to Scripture the Divine promise is always the petitioner's best warrant—**and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,**—this was the sense, without the *ipsissima verba* of the Bethel promise, which likened Jacob's descendants to the dust upon the ground, as Abraham's seed had previously been compared to the dust of the earth (ch. xiii. 16), the stars of heaven (ch. xv. 5), and the sand upon the sea-shore (ch. xxii. 17)—**which cannot be numbered for multitude.**

Ver. 13.—**And he lodged there that same night; and took**—not by random, but after careful selection; separavit (Vulgate)—**of that which came to his hand**—not of those things which were in his hand, ὧν ἔφερεν (LXX.), such as he had (Ainsworth), *quæ in manu erant* (Rosenmüller), but of such things as had come into his hand, *i. e.* as he had acquired (Keil, Alford, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis)—**a present** (Minchah; used in ch. iv. 3, 4, 5, as a sacrifice to Jehovah, *q. v.*) **for Esau his brother.**

Ver. 14, 15—**Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels** (specially valuable in the East on account of their milk, which was peculiarly sweet and wholesome) **with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.** The selection was in harmony with the general possessions of nomads (cf. Job i. 3; xlii. 12), and the proportion of male to female animals was arranged according to what the experience of the best ancient authorities has shown to be necessary for the purposes of breeding (Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch).

Ver. 16.—**And he delivered** them **into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves** (literally, *drove and drove separately*); **and said unto his servants, Pass over** (the river Jabbok) **before me, and put a space** (literally, *a breathing-place*) **betwixt drove and drove**—as is still the manner with Oriental shepherds (cf. 'Land and Book,' p. 331).

Vers. 17—20.—**And he commanded the foremost, saying** (with admirable tact and prudence), **When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose** art **thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? then thou shalt say,** They be **thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he** (Jacob) is **behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him**—literally, *in your finding of him.* **And say ye** (literally, *and ye shall say*) **moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us**—"for he thought that this would convince Esau that he went to meet him with complete confidence, and without apprehension" (Kalisch)—**for he said** (the historian adds the motive which explained Jacob's singular behaviour), **I will appease him** (literally, *I will cover his face*, meaning I will prevent him from seeing my past offences, *i. e.* I will turn away his anger or pacify him, as in Prov. xvi. 14) **with the present that goeth before me,**—literally, *going before my face.* So Abigail appeased David with a present (1 Sam. xxv. 18—32)—**and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me**—literally, *lift up my face;* a proverbial expression for granting a favourable reception (cf. ch. xix. 21; Job xlii. 8). "Jacob did not miscalculate the influence of his princely offerings, and I verily believe there is not an emeer or sheikh in all Gilead at this day who would not be appeased by such presents; and from my personal knowledge of Orientals, I should say that Jacob need not have been in such great terror, following in their rear. Far less will now 'make room,' as Solomon says, for any offender, however atrocious, and bring him before great men with acceptance" ('Land and Book,' p. 371).

Ver. 21—23.—**So** (literally, *and*) **went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company. And he rose up that night,**—*i. e.* some time before daybreak (*vide* ver. 24)—**and took his two wives, and his two womenservants** (Bilhah and Zilpah), **and his eleven sons** (Dinah being not mentioned in accordance with the common usage of the Bible), **and passed over the ford**—the word signifies a place of passing over. Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 558) speaks of the strong current reaching the horses' girths at the ford crossed by himself and twenty horsemen—**Jabbok.** Jabbok, from *bakak*, to empty, to pour forth (Kalisch), or from *abak*, to struggle (Keil), may have been so named either from the natural appearance of the river, or, as is more probable, by prolepsis from the wrestling which took place upon its banks. It is now called the *Wady Zerka*, or Blue River,

which flows into the Jordan, nearly opposite Shechem, and midway between the Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea. The stream is rapid, and often completely hidden by the dense mass of oleander which fringes its banks ('Land of Israel,' p. 558). **And he took them, and sent them** (literally, *caused them to pass*) **over the brook, and sent over that he had**—himself remaining on the north side (Delitzsch, Keil, Kurtz, Murphy, Gerlach, Wordsworth, Alford), although, having once crossed the stream (ver. 22), it is not perfectly apparent that he recrossed, which has led some to argue that the wrestling occurred on the south of the river (Knobel, Rosenmüller, Lange, Kalisch).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—23.—*Mahanaim, or preparing for Esau.* I. THE ANGELIC APPARITION. 1. *The time when it occurred.* (1) After Jacob had concluded a covenant of peace with Laban. Celestial visitations of a peaceful and encouraging character are never vouchsafed to those who are living in a state of enmity with their fellow-men. The troubled sea reflects not the shining face of heaven, and neither does the wrathful soul invite approaches of God. (2) When Jacob was proceeding on his way to Canaan. The road which Jacob now pursued was the path of duty, inasmuch as it had been prescribed by God, and led to the covenant inheritance; and only then need the saints expect to meet with either God or his angels, when they are walking in the way of his commandments, and making for the better country, even an heavenly. 2. *The impression which it made.* Whether completely surrounding him, or divided into two companies, one on either side of him, Jacob's angelic visitors, from their number, their orderly array, their military dispositions, assumed the appearance of a heavenly army lying encamped over against his own; and the sight of the two companies immediately suggested the ejaculation, "This is God's host," and caused him to name the place Mahanaim. 3. *The purpose which it served.* For an enumeration of the different ends which this sublime vision is supposed to have been intended to subserve the Exposition may be consulted. The greatest probability attaches to that which regards it as having been designed to prepare Jacob for his rapidly-approaching interview with Esau. It was fitted to remind him of the heavenly reinforcements that are always at hand to succour saints in their extremities (cf. 2 Kings vi. 17; Ps. xxxiv. 6; Zech. ix. 8; Heb. i. 14).

II. THE FRIENDLY EMBASSY. 1. The *despatch* of the messengers. (1) Their destination—to Mount Seir, to Esau; (2) their instructions—to inform Esau of Jacob's prosperous estate and immediate return; (3) their design—to deprecate the wrath of Esau, and find grace for Jacob in his sight. 2. The *return* of the messengers. (1) Their alarming report—that Esau was on the way with 400 men; (2) the terror it produced—Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; (3) the acts to which it led—stratagem, supplication, conciliation.

III. THE SUDDEN STRATAGEM. Jacob divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two bands. 1. An evidence of Jacob's *self-possession.* The fear inspired by Esau's approach had not been so great as to make him lose command of his faculties. Men that have God upon their side should not allow themselves to be thrown by evil tidings into excessive trepidation (Ps. xxvii. 1—3; Rom. viii. 31). 2. A proof of Jacob's *prudence.* The division of his company into two bands afforded to one at least of the portions a chance of escaping the sword of Esau. Though contrary to the Divine word to resist evil, it is not wrong to use all lawful endeavours to avoid it. 3. A testimony to Jacob's *chivalry.* In a time of danger he thinks of the safety of others, of the women and children, rather than of himself. 4. A sign of Jacob's *meekness.* He contemplates not armed resistance to the onset of his infuriated brother, but prepares by peaceful means to elude at least the full force of his attack.

IV. THE EARNEST PRAYER. Characterised by—1. *Lofty faith.* Jacob addresses himself to God as to a living personality, and not as to an impersonal force; to the God of the covenant,—"O God of my father Abraham," &c.,—and not simply to God in the abstract, as the inscrutable power that presides over men and things, and bases his appeal upon the promises which God in virtue of that covenant had extended to himself. 2. *Profound humility.* He not only acknowledges the

Divine hand in his remarkable prosperity, which is always difficult for the proud spirit of the worldling to do, but he distinctly describes "all the mercies" he has received to the pure, unmerited grace of God, declaring himself to be utterly less than the least of them. Language such as this is either impious hypocrisy or lowly humility. 3. *Beautiful simplicity.* Plain, direct, artless, and confiding, it is such a prayer as a loving child might breathe into a mother's ear when driven by impending danger to seek shelter in her bosom:—"Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of Esau my brother: for I fear him."

V. The conciliatory present. "A man's gift maketh room for him," says Solomon (Prov. xviii. 16); and again, "A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a reward in the bosom strong wrath" (Prov. xxi. 14). The gift of Jacob to his brother was—1. *Handsomely prepared.* It was munificently and generously selected from the best of the flocks and herds in his possession. 2. *Skilfully arranged.* The sheep, goats, camels, asses, kine that composed it were drawn up in a series of droves, which were despatched in succession under the care of as many drivers. 3. *Promptly despatched.* The measures just recited were adopted on the very day that Jacob's messengers returned, and the several droves despatched upon their journey ere the night fell. 4. *Peacefully designed.* They were meant to appease the wrath of Esau.

Lessons:—1. The ministry of angels. 2. The courage inspired by true religion. 3. The value of prayer. 4. The use of a present.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Divine protection.* The pilgrim on his way is met by the angels of God. They are two hosts—"Mahanaim," that is, twofold defence, before and behind. There was fear in the man, but there was trust and prayer. He saw the objective vision, but the inward preparation of heart enabled him to see it. On our way we may reckon on supernatural protection—protection for ourselves, protection for those who are Divinely appointed to be with us. The double host is an emblem of that angelic guardianship which we are told (Ps. xxxiv. and xci.) "encampeth round about them that fear the Lord, and delivereth them," "keepeth them in all their ways."—R.

Vers. 3—8.—*Faith and fellowship.* Jacob's preparation against danger betokened his sense of duty to do his utmost under the circumstances, and his sense of past errors and ill desert towards his brother. There is an exercise of our own judgment in times of distress and extremity which is quite consistent with dependence upon God.—R.

Vers. 9—12.—*Jacob's prayer.* 1. It was the prayer of *humility.* 2. Of *faith*—faith in a covenant God, faith in him who had already revealed himself, faith in promises made to the individual as well as to God's people generally, faith founded on experience of the past, faith which has been mingled with obedience, and therefore lays hold of Divine righteousness. He has commanded me to return; I am in the way of his commandments. Faith in the great purpose of God and his kingdom: "I will make thy seed as the sand of the sea," &c. So Luther, in his sense of personal weakness in a troubled world, cried, "The Lord must save his own Church." 3. It was the prayer of *gratitude.* "*I was alone; I am now two bands;*" "not worthy of the least of thy mercies," &c., "yet abundantly blessed."—R.

Vers. 13—23.—*The crisis at hand.* Jacob understood the human heart.

I. Kindness will work wonders. "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face." It gave Esau time to think of an altered state of things, a changed brother, and his own brotherly affection, not entirely destroyed.

II. Importunity in doing good. The repeated strokes upon the iron changes its nature. We may learn a lesson from Jacob to prepare human hearts for the reception of the gospel by the same importunity. Kind deeds and kind words will often open the way for a more direct face-to-face pleading for God.

III. Experience sanctifies. The trials of Jacob's life were working a deeper and more loving *wisdom*—working *out* the more selfish craft, and transmuting the natural features of a character, far from pure and simple at first, into such as blended more really with the work of grace. So in the course of providence family cares and anxieties deliver us from lower thoughts, or may do so, if we serve God, and help us to walk steadfastly in the way of faith.

IV. The true love provides for its objects. The shepherd with his flocks, and family, with his little bands of precious ones, fearing for them, and yet working for them, and putting them before him in the hands of God, is a type of the great Shepherd of the sheep, who was "not ashamed to call them brethren;" and saying, as he stood in their midst,—partaker of their infirmities, representative of their wants and sorrows, guardian of their safety,—"I will put my trust in him. Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. ii. 13).

V. The two worlds. If Esau be taken as a type of the kingdoms of this world threatening the kingdom of God, Jacob represents the little flock to whom the promise of victory and peace has been given. The true *mediator* must be left alone by the ford Jabbok. The place of his intercession and prevailing is where none of the people is with him, can be with him.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 24.—**And Jacob was left alone** (probably on the north bank of the Jabbok; but *vide* on ver. 23); **and there wrestled**—thus assaulting in his strong point one who had been a wrestler or heel-catcher from his youth (Murphy). The old word נֶאֱבַק, niph. of אָבַק, unused, a denom. from אָבָק, dust, because in wrestling the dust is raised (**Aben Ezra**, Gesenius), or a weakened form of חָבַק, **to wind** round, to embrace (Fürst), obviously contains **an allusion** to the Jabbok (*vide* on ver. 22)—**a man**—called an angel by Hosea (ch. xii. 4), and God by Jacob (ver. 30); but *vide infra*—**with him until the breaking of the day**—literally, *the ascending of the morning*.

Ver. 25.—**And when he** (the unknown wrestler) **saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched**—not struck (Knobel)—**the hollow of his thigh** (literally, *the socket of the hip*); **and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him**—literally, *in his wrestling with him*.

Ver. 26.—**And he** (the man) **said, Let me go** (literally, *send me away;* meaning that he yielded the victory to Jacob, adding as a reason for his desire to depart), **for the day breaketh**—literally, *for the morning or the dawn ascendeth;* and therefore it is time for thee to proceed to other duties (Willet, Clarke, Murphy), *e. g.* to meet Esau and appease his anger ('Speaker's Commentary'). Perhaps also the angel was unwilling that the vision which was meant for Jacob only should be seen by others (Pererius), or even that his own glory should be beheld by Jacob (Ainsworth). Calvin thinks the language was so shaped as to lead Jacob to infer *nocturna visione se divinitus fuisse edoctum*. **And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.** The words show that Jacob now clearly recognised his mysterious Antagonist to be Divine, and sought to obtain from him the blessing which he had previously stolen from his aged father by craft.

Ver. 27.—**And he said unto him, What is thy name?** (not as if requiring to be informed, but as directing attention to it in view of the change about to be made upon it) **And he said, Jacob**—*i. e.* Heel-catcher, or Supplanter (*vide* ch. xxv. 26).

Ver. 28.—**And he said, Thy name shall be called no more** (*i. e.* exclusively, since both he and his descendants are in Scripture sometimes **after this styled**) **Jacob, but Israel:**—יִשְׂרָאֵל, from שָׂרָה, **to be chief, to fight,** though, after the example of Ishmael, God hears, it might be rendered "God governs" (Kalisch), yet seems in this place to signify either Prince of El (Calvin, Ainsworth, Dathe, Murphy, Wordsworth, and others), or wrestler with God (Fürst, Keil, Kurtz, Lange, *et alii*), rather than warrior of God (Gesenius), if indeed both ideas may not be combined in the name as the princely wrestler with God ('Speaker's Commentary,' Bush), an interpretation adopted by the A. V.—**for as a prince hast thou power with God**—literally, *for thou hast contended with Elohim* (Keil, Alford, &c.), ὅτι ἐνίσχυσας μετὰ θεοῦ (LXX.), *contra deum fortis fuisti* (Vulgate), thou hast obtained the mastery with God (Kalisch), rather than, thou hast striven to be a prince with God (Murphy)—**and with men, and hast prevailed.** So are the words rendered by the best authorities (Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Wordsworth), though the translation καὶ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων δυνατὸς ἔσῃ (LXX.), *quanto magis contra homines prevalebis* (Vulgate)

is by some preferred (Calvin, Rosenmüller, &c.).

Ver. 29.—**And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.** A request indicating great boldness on the part of Jacob—the boldness of faith (Heb. iv. 16; x. 19); and importing a desire on Jacob's part to be acquainted, not merely with the designation, but with the mysterious character of the Divine personage with whom he had been contending. **And he** (the mysterious stranger) **said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?** Cf. Judges xiii. 18, where the angel gives the same reply to Manoah, adding, "seeing it is secret;" literally, *wonderful*, i. e. incomprehensible to mortal man; though here the words of Jacob's antagonist may mean that his name, so far as it could be learnt by man, was already plain from the occurrence which had taken place (Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Bush). **And he blessed him there.** After this, every vestige of doubt disappeared from the soul of Jacob.

Ver. 30.—**And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel** (*i. e.* "the face of God." Its situation must have been close to the Jabbok. The reason given for its designation follows): **for I have seen God** (Elohim) **face to face, and my life is preserved** (cf. ch. xvi. 13; Exod. xxiv. 11; xxxiii. 20; Judges vi. 22; xiii. 22; Isa. vi. 5).

Ver. 31.—**And as he passed over Penuel**—this some suppose to have been the original name of the place, which Jacob changed by the alteration of a vowel, but it is probably nothing more than an old form of the same word—**the sun rose upon him,**—"there was sunshine within and sunshine without. When Judas went forth on his dark design, we read, 'It was night,' John xiii. 30" (Inglis)—**and he halted upon his thigh**—thus carrying with him a memorial of his conflict, as Paul afterwards bore about with him a stake in his flesh (2 Cor. xii. 7).

Ver. 32.—**Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank,**—the *gid hannasheh*, rendered by the LXX. *τὸ νεῦρον ὃ ἐνάρκησεν*, the nerve which became numb, and by the Vulgate *nervus qui emarcuit*, the nerve which withered, is the long tendon or sinew *nervus ischiaticus* (the tendo Achillis of the Greeks) reaching from the spinal marrow to the ankle. The derivation of *hannasheh* is unknown (Gesenius), though the LXX. appear to have connected it with *nashah*, to dislocate, become feeble; Ainsworth with *nashah*, to forget (*i. e.* the sinew that forgat its place), and Fürst with *nashah*, to be prolonged (*vide* 'Michaelis Suppl.', p. 303)—**which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day:**—*i. e.* the day of Moses; though the custom continues to the present time among the Hebrews of cutting out this sinew from the beasts they kill and eat (*vide* Ainsworth *in loco*); but, according to Michaelis (Suppl., p. 303), *eo nemo omnino mortalium, si vel nullo cognationis gradu Jacobum attingat, nemo Græcus, nemo barbarus vesci velit*—**because he** (*i. e.* the angel) **touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 24—32.—*Peniel, or the mysterious contest.* I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUGGLE. 1. *The scene.* The north bank of Jabbok (*vide* Exposition). 2. *The time.* Night; the most suitable season for soul exercises, such as self-examination (Ps. iv. 4), meditation (Ps. lxiii. 6), devotion (Luke vi. 12). 3. *The circumstances.* Jacob was alone. In solitude the human soul discovers most of itself, and enjoys most frequent interviews with God (Ps. lxxvii. 6; Dan. x. 8; John xvi. 32). 4. *The combatants.* (1) Jacob: by nature the supplanter, by grace the heir of the covenant; who in early life by craft had overreached his brother Esau in the matters of the family birthright and theocratic blessing, and who had now, by the despatch of his munificent present to "my lord Esau," renounced both, so far at least as renunciation was possible, *i. e.* in respect of material and temporal advantages. (2) A man, *i. e.* one who in outward appearance wore the form of a man, though in reality "the visible revealer of the invisible God" (Delitzsch); the angel of Jehovah, who had previously appeared in like guise to Abraham at Mamre (ch. xviii. 1), and who subsequently, in the fulness of the times, incarnated himself as the Word made flesh (John i. 14). 5. *The combat.* (1) Its commencement. When precisely this mysterious conflict began, and how Jacob was engaged at the moment of the unknown wrestler's approach, are points upon which the narrative is silent, though it is probable that Jacob was employed in fervent supplication, and that, without knowing how, he suddenly became conscious of being involved in a close physical struggle with a powerful antagonist. Perhaps this was designed to suggest that God's approaches to the praying soul are mostly sudden and inexplicable (cf. John iii. 8). (2) Its character. Though unquestionably depicted in the narrative as a

veritable contest between two human beings, it is apparent that underlying the physical struggle, and related to it as the substance to the shadow, as the soul to the body, was another spiritual contending carried on by means of prayers and tears (Hosea xii. 4). (3) Its continuance. Beginning probably at midnight, it was protracted until dawn, a circumstance suggestive of Jacob's earnestness and determination, and yet attesting the severe character of all true spiritual conflicts, and the extraordinary difficulty of achieving victories with God (Matt. xii. 12). (4) Its course. Four stages are discernible in this mysterious struggle. (*a*) The wrestlers appear to be equally balanced in their strength and skill, so that the stranger finds himself unable to prevail against Jacob, and laying his finger on his adversary's hip, puts it out of joint—a hint to Jacob that though seemingly the victory inclined towards him, it was due not so much, or even at all, to his wisdom and prowess, but rather to the stranger's grace and good-will. (*b*) Jacob having thus been disabled, his mysterious antagonist, as if owning that the mastery remained with him, requests permission to depart, alleging as a reason that the ascending dawn proclaimed the day's return, and called to other duties—a valuable reminder that religion has other necessary works for God's saints besides devotion and contemplation; but Jacob, who by this time recognised his antagonist as Divine, objected to his departure without confirming the blessing he had formerly received at Bethel—and this, the personal reception and enjoyment of the blessing of the covenant, should be the end and aim of all the saint's contendings with God and communings with Heaven. (*c*) Inquiring Jacob's name, the Divine adversary now discovers his true personality by authoritatively changing that name to Israel, prince of El, in token of his victory—an outward symbol of the completed spiritual renovation which had taken place in Jacob since God first met with him at Bethel. (*d*) Probably excited, or spiritually elevated, by what had just transpired, Jacob ventures, either with holy boldness or with unthinking curiosity, to inquire after his heavenly antagonist's name, but is answered that in the mean time he must rest satisfied with the blessing which was then and there pronounced. It was either a rebuke to Jacob's presumption, or, and with greater probability, a reminder that even holy boldness has its limits, beyond which it may not intrude. (5) Its close. Suddenly and mysteriously as the stranger came did he also disappear, leaving Jacob in possession of the blessing indeed, but also of a dislocated limb. So God frequently accompanies spiritual enrichment with material and temporal deprivation, in order both to evince his own sovereignty and to keep his saints humble (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 7). (6) Its commemoration. By Jacob, who called the place Peniel; by Jacob's descendants, who to this day eat not of the sciatic nerve in animals they kill for food.

II. THE REALITY OF THE STRUGGLE. The question arises whether the contest just described had an objective reality (Hävernick, Kurtz, Murphy, Alford, &c.), or partook of a purely subjective character, being in fact an allegorical description of a spiritual conflict in the soul of Jacob (Kalisch), or a wrestling which took place only in a dream (Hengstenberg), or in an ecstasy (Delitzsch, Keil, Lange), for the idea of its being a myth (Bohlen, De Wette, Oort, Kuenen) may be discarded. 1. Against the notion of a dream-vision it is sufficient to remark that if Jacob's wrestling was a dream, so also were his victory and his blessing dreams. Besides, limbs do not usually become dislocated in dreams. 2. To read the passage as an allegory is both forced and unnatural, and "little better than trifling with the sacred narrative" (Alford). 3. There is no insuperable objection to the idea of an ecstasy, provided it is not intended to exclude the objective manifestation; yet, 4. There does not seem sufficient reason for departing from the obvious and literal sense of the passage, according to which there was a *bonâ fide* corporeal contest between Jacob and the angel of Jehovah in human form; for (1) the narrative gives no indication that it was designed in this part to be interpreted otherwise than literally and historically, as in the surrounding context; (2) unless on the hypothesis that the supernatural is the unreal, there is no imperative necessity why exception should be taken to the objective character of this remarkable struggle; (3) the dislocation of Jacob's thigh points to an actual physical contest; and (4) the other events in the narrative appear to require that the historic credibility of Jacob's wrestling be maintained.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE. That a momentous crisis had arisen in

Jacob's history is universally admitted. He was now returning to the land of Canaan a man of mature age, being in his ninety-seventh year, and of a singularly diversified experience, both natural and spiritual. In his early life he had twice supplanted Esau by means of craft, depriving him of his birthright and blessing, and now he was on the eve of meeting that formidable brother whom he had wronged. That the prospective interview filled him with alarm is explicitly declared (ch. xxxii. 7); but it likewise drove him to take refuge in prayer, in which exercise it is scarcely doubtful he was engaged when his mysterious assailant approached. What then did this extraordinary combat signify in the spiritual consciousness of Jacob? Putting together those views which do not necessarily exclude one another, and which appear to contain an element of truth, it may be said that this remarkable experience through which the patriarch passed at Jabbok was designed to have a threefold bearing. 1. *On his fear of Esau.* Apprehensive of his brother, he now learns that not Esau, but Jehovah, was his real adversary (Keil, Kurtz, Gerlach, Candlish), and that before he can ever hope to triumph over Esau he must first conquer God. 2. *On his retention of the blessing.* Having previously, as he thought, obtained the birthright and its accompanying blessing by means of carnal policy and worldly stratagem, he now discovers that it cannot be received, or, if he renounced it in the act of homage done to Esau (Lange), cannot be recovered except directly from the lips of God, and by means of earnest cries and entreaties (Keil)—a truth taught him, according to Kurtz, by the dislocation of his thigh, which caused him to discontinue his corporeal wrestling, and resort to prayers and tears. 3. *On his personal character.* Jacob during all his past career, from his birth, when he caught his brother by the heel, to his last years in Haran, when he overreached the crafty and avaricious Laban, having been a person who sought to overcome by means of self-reliance and personal effort, it was now designed to teach him that, as the heir of the covenant, the weapons of his warfare were not to be carnal, but spiritual, and that his advancement to the place predestined for him of pre-eminence over his brethren was to be brought about by earnest reliance upon God (Murphy).

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 24—32.—"*Peniel.*" "*The face of God.*" The patriarchal revelation at its best. The main point, the personal wrestling of the believer with the angel of deliverance. Through that scene Jacob passed as by a baptism (ford Jabbok) into the full enjoyment of confidence in Jehovah, into the theanthropic faith. A man wrestled with him. The faith of Jacob was now to be a faith resting not upon tradition alone, nor upon promises and commandments alone, nor upon past experience alone, but upon a living, personal union with God. The wrestling was a type of that intimate fellowship which spiritually identifies the individual child of God with the Father through the man Christ Jesus. The pilgrim on his way is henceforth the prince, having power with God and with men. It is a great lesson on prevailing prayer. 1. *The prayer of faith.* 2. *The prayer of importunity.* 3. *The prayer of intense desire.* "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Bless me for myself, bless me for my family, bless me for the world. But Jacob was a type of the true Prince of God prevailing for his people. He wrestled, he wrestled alone, he wrestled to his own suffering and humiliation, although into victory. He obtained the blessing as the Mediator. Although the patriarch was not allowed to know the name of the angel, he was himself named by the angel. Although we cannot with all our searching find out God, and even the revelation of Christ leaves much unknown, still we are "known of him." He gives us one name, and by that name we know him to be ours, which is the true saving knowledge. Peniel, the face of God, is the name not of God himself, but of the blessed revelation of God. We know where we may find him. We may each one start afresh from our Peniel, where we have been blessed of God, and have through Christ prevailed against the darkness of the future and the helplessness of our own impotence. Nor must we forget that this wrestling was reconciliation—the reconciliation between man and God, preceding the reconciliation between man and man. The lameness of the patriarch

symbolised the life of dependence upon which he henceforth entered with much more entire surrender than before. "As the sun rose upon him, he halted upon his thigh." It was the morning of a new life—the life of man's confessed nothingness and God's manifested sufficiency. In such a light we can see light. The day may have dangers in it, but it will be a day of mighty deliverance, Divine blessedness, rejoicing in personal salvation and peaceful life.—R.

Ver. 28.—*A new name.* "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." Twenty years before Jacob learned at Bethel to know God as a living and present Protector. This a great step in spiritual life; belief of God in heaven, becoming consciousness of God "in this place," guiding all events. It is the first step towards walking with God. But his training not yet complete. Truth is usually grasped by degrees. Unbelief, cast out, returns in new forms and under new pretences. A common mistake at beginning of Christian life is to think that the battle is at an end when decision made. The soul may have passed from death to life; but much still to be done, much to be learned. Many a young Christian little knows the weakness of his faith. During these years Jacob shows real faith, but not perfect reliance (ch. xxx. 37; xxxi. 20). Returning home greatly enriched, he heard of Esau at hand. He feared his anger. No help in man; God's promise his only refuge. Could he trust to it? His wrestling. We cannot picture its outward form; but its essence a spiritual struggle. His endurance tried by bodily infirmity (cf. Job ii. 5) and by the apparent unwillingness of the Being with whom he strove (cf. Matt. xv. 26). His answer showed determination (cf. 2 Kings iv. 30). This prevailed; weak as he was, he received the blessing (cf. Heb. xi. 34). And the new name was the sign of his victory (cf. Matt. xxi. 22; 1 John v. 4).

I. THE STRUGGLE. Why thus protracted? It was not merely a prolonged prayer, like Luke vi. 12. There was some hindrance to be overcome (cf. Matt. xi. 12); not by muscular force, but by earnest supplication. Where Scripture is silent we must speak cautiously. But probable explanation is the state of Jacob's own mind. Hitherto faith had been mixed with faithlessness; belief in the promise with hesitation to commit the means to God. Against this divided mind (James i. 8) the Lord contended. No peace while this remained (cf. Isa. xxvi. 3). And the lesson of that night was to trust God's promise entirely (cf. Ps. xxxvii. 3). When this was learned the wrestling of the Spirit against the double mind was at an end. Such a struggle may be going on in the hearts of some here. A craving for peace, yet a restless disquiet. The gospel believed, yet failing to bring comfort. Prayer for peace apparently unanswered, so that there seemed to be some power contending against us. Why is this? Most probably from failing to commit all to God. Perhaps requiring some sign (John xx. 25), some particular state of feeling, or change of disposition; perhaps looking for faith within as the ground of trust; perhaps choosing the particular blessing—self-will as to the morsel of the bread of life to satisfy us, instead of taking every word of God. There is the evil. It is against self thou must strive. Behold thy loving Saviour; will he fail thee in the hour of need? Tell all to him; commit thyself into his hands; not once or twice, but habitually.

II. THE NEW NAME (cf. Rev. iii. 12). No more Jacob, the crafty, but Israel, God's prince (cf. Rev. i. 6). The token of victory over distrust, self-will, self-confidence. In knowledge of poverty is wealth (Matt. v. 3); in knowledge of weakness, strength (2 Cor. xii. 10). That name is offered to all. The means, persevering prayer; but prayer not to force our will upon God, but that trust may be so entire that our wills may in all things embrace his.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Vers. 1, 2.—**And Jacob**, having the day before despatched his conciliatory gift to Esau, turned his back upon the Jabbok, having crossed to the south bank, if the previous night had been spent upon its north side, passed over the rising ground of Peniel (*vide* Tristram's 'Land of Israel,' p. 558), and advanced to meet his brother, richly

laden with the heavenly blessing he had won in his mysterious conflict with Elohim, and to all appearance free from those paralysing fears which, previous to the midnight struggle, the prospect of meeting Esau had inspired. Having already prevailed with God, he had an inward assurance, begotten by the words of his celestial antagonist, that he would likewise prevail with man, and so he **lifted up his eyes** (*vide* on ch. xiii. 10), **and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men** (*vide* ch. xxxii. 6). **And he** (*i. e.* Jacob) **divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids**, Bilhah and Zilpah, thus omitting no wise precaution to insure safety for at least a portion of his household, in case Esau should be still incensed and resolved on a hostile attack. **And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost**, as being most beloved (Kalisch, Murphy, Lange, and others) or most beautiful (Bush).

Vers. 3, 4.—**And he** (the introduction of the pronoun giving emphasis to the statement) **passed over before them** (*i. e.* passed on in front of them, thus chivalrously putting himself in the place of danger), **and bowed himself to the ground**—not completely prostrating the body, as Abraham did in ch. xix. 1, but bending forward till the upper part of it became parallel with the ground, a mode of expressing deep reverence and respect, which may be seen to life in Oriental countries at the present day (Roberts, 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 41)—**seven times** (not in immediate succession, but bowing and advancing), **until he came near to his brother.** The conduct of Jacob was dictated neither by artful hypocrisy nor by unmanly timidity; but by true politeness and a sincere desire to conciliate. **And as such it was accepted by Esau**, who **ran to meet him, and**, his better feelings kindling at the sight of his long-absent brother, **embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him**—as Joseph afterwards did to Benjamin (ch. xlv. 14, 15), though the *puncta extraordinaria* of the Masorites over the word "kissed" seem to indicate either that in their judgment Esau was incapable of such fraternal affection (Delitzsch, Kalisch), or that the word was suspicious, Origen appearing not to have found it in his codices (Rosenmüller, Keil), unless indeed the conjecture be correct that the word was marked to draw attention to the power of God's grace in changing Esau's heart (Ainsworth). **And they wept**—the LXX. adding *both*. "All this is beautiful, natural, Oriental" ('Land and Book,' p. 372).

Ver. 5.—**And he** (*i. e.* Esau) **lifted up his eyes,**—corresponding to the act of Jacob (ver. 1), and expressive of surprise—**and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee?** (literally, *to thee*, i. e. whom thou hast). **And he** (Jacob) **said, The children which God** (Elohim; *vide infra* on ver. 10) **hath graciously given**—the verb חָנַן being construed with a double accusative, as in Judges xxi. 22; Ps. cxix. 29—**thy servant.**

Vers. 6, 7.—**Then** (literally, *and*) **the handmaidens came near, they and their children** (since they occupied the front rank in the procession which followed Jacob), **and they bowed themselves** (after his example). **And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.** The remark of Lange, that the six-year old lad who comes before his mother seems to break through all the cumbrous ceremonial, and to rush confidently into the arms of his uncle, is as fanciful and far-fetched as that of Jarchi, that Joseph took precedence of his mother because he feared lest Esau, who was a *homo profanus*, should be fascinated by his mother's beauty, and seek to do her wrong; in which case he would try to hinder him.

Ver. 8.—**And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove**—literally, *What to thee all this camp* (Mahaneh)—**which I met?**—*i. e.* yesterday, referring to the droves which had been sent on by Jacob as a present to my lord Esau (ch. xxxii. 16). **And he said,** These are **to find grace in the sight of my lord** (*vide* ch. xxxii. 5).

Ver. 9.—**And Esau said, I have enough** (literally, *Here is to me abundance*), **my brother** (it is impossible not to admire the generous and affectionate disposition of Esau); **keep that thou hast unto thyself** (literally, *let be to thee what is to thee*, i. e. what belongs to thee).

Vers. 10, 11.—**And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore**—כִּי־עַל־כֵּן, because (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Quarry), or, for this purpose (Keil, Kalisch, Hengstenberg, Lange, Ewald. *Vide* ch. xviii. 5; xix. 8; xxxviii. 26)—**I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God,**—literally, *as a vision of the face of Elohim*, in which language Jacob neither uses adulation towards his brother (Tostatius), nor calls him a god in the sense in which heathen potentates are styled deities (Vatablus, Arabic, Chaldee), nor simply uses a superlative expression to indicate the majesty (Menochius) or benevolence (Ainsworth) of Esau's countenance, nor signifies that he had recognised the person of Esau in the angel who contended with him at the Jabbok (Bush); but either that he had received from

Esau the same friendly welcome that one coming into God's presence would receive from him (Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or that he had come into Esau's presence with the same feelings of penitence as if he had been coming before God (Kalisch), or that, as he had already seen the face of God and his life was preserved, so now he had seen the face of Esau, and the anticipated destruction had not been inflicted on him (Quarry), either of which accords with the words that follow—**and thou wast pleased with me**—literally, *thou hast graciously received me*, the unexpressed thought being, as already I have been favourably accepted by Elohim. Hence Jacob with greater urgency renews his entreaty that Esau would not decline his proffered gift, saying, **Take, I pray thee, my blessing** (*i. e.* my present, the word signifying, as in 1 Sam. xxv. 27; xxx. 26; 2 Kings v. 15, a gift by which one seeks to express good-will) **that is brought to thee**;—or, which has been caused to come to thee, adding, as a special reason to induce him to accept—**because God hath dealt graciously with me**,—Elohim, it has been thought, is used here and in ver. 5 by Jacob instead of Jehovah, either "to avoid reminding Esau of the blessing of Jehovah which had occasioned his absence" (Delitzsch, Keil), or "because Jehovah was exalted far above the level of Esau's superficial religion" Hengstenberg); but it is just possible that by its employment Jacob only wished to acknowledge the Divine hand in the remarkable prosperity which had attended him in Haran—**and because I have enough**—literally, *there is to me all*, i. e. everything I can wish (Murphy), all things as the heir of the promise (Keil). The expression is stronger than that used by Esau (ver. 9), and is regarded by some (Ainsworth) as indicating a more contented spirit than that evinced by Esau. **And he urged him.** In Eastern countries the acceptance of a gift is equivalent to the striking of a covenant of friendship. If your present be received by your superior you may rely on his friendship; if it be declined you have everything to fear. It was on this ground that Jacob was so urgent in pressing Esau to accept his present (cf. A. Clarke *in loco*). **And he took it**, and so gave Jacob an assurance of his complete reconciliation.

Ver. 12.—**And he** (*i. e.* Esau) **said** (in further token of his amity), **Let us take our journey, and let us go**,—but whether he intended to accompany Jacob on his way (Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*) or invited Jacob to go with him to Mount Seir (Ainsworth, Clericus) is uncertain. On the first hypothesis it is difficult to explain how Esau came to be travelling in the same direction as his brother, while the adoption of the second will serve in some measure to elucidate Jacob's language in ver. 14. But whichever way the words of Esau are understood, they amounted to an offer to be an escort to Jacob through the desert regions with which his excursions had made him familiar, since he added, **and I will go before thee**—*i. e.* to lead the way.

Ver. 13.—**And he** (Jacob, politely declining Esau's society and protection, though apparently accepting his invitation to go to Mount Seir) **said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender** (Joseph at this time being little over six years of age), **and the flocks and herds with young** (literally, *giving milk;* עָלוֹת, from עוּל, to give suck) are **with me**,—literally, *upon me*, i. e. are an object of my special care, because of their condition (Rosenmüller, Keil)—**and if men should over-drive them** — literally, *and they* (sc. the shepherds) *will over-drive them*, i. e. in order to keep pace with Esau's armed followers they must do so, and in that case, if they were to do so for only—**one day, all the flock** (literally, *and all the flock*) **will die.** Thomson says that Oriental shepherds gently lead along the mothers when in the condition spoken of by Jacob, knowing well that even one day's over-driving would be fatal to them, and, from the fact that Jacob's ewes were giving milk, infers that it was winter time, since then alone the flocks are in that condition—an inference which he further confirms by observing that at Succoth Jacob constructed booths for their protection ('Land and Book,' p. 205).

Ver. 14.—**Let my lord, I pray thee,**—it is perhaps too much to explain Jacob's obsequious and deferential address to his brother (my lord) as the sign of a guilty conscience (Kalisch, Alford), when possibly politeness and humility will suffice—**pass over**—not cross the Jordan (Alford), since Esau was not journeying to Canaan; but simply pass on, as in ver. 3—**before his servant: and I will lead on softly** (literally, *I will go on at my slow pace*), **according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure**,—literally, *according to the foot*, i. e. the pace, *of the property* (here, cattle), *and according to the foot of the children;* i. e. as fast as flocks and children can be made with safety to travel—**until I come unto my lord unto Seir.** It is apparent that Jacob at first intended to accept Esau's invitation to visit him at Seir, either immediately (Clericus, Kalisch), or, as is more probable, afterwards (Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though, if afterwards, the historian has preserved no record of any such

journey, while, if presently such was his intention, he must have been providentially led, from some cause not mentioned, to alter his determination (Bush, Inglis, Clarke), unless we either think that he really went to Seir, though it is not here stated (Patrick), or entertain the, in the circumstances, almost incredible hypothesis that Jacob practised a deception on his generous brother in order to get rid of him, by promising what he never meant to fulfil, viz., to visit him at Mount Seir (Calvin), or leave it doubtful whether it is the old Jacob or the new Israel who speaks (Lange).

Ver. 15.—**And Esau said, Let me now leave** (literally, *set*, or *place*) **with thee** (as an escort or guard) **some of the folk**—*i. e.* armed followers (*vide* ver. 1)—**that are with me.** But of even this proposal Jacob appears to have been apprehensive. **And he said, What needeth it?** (literally, *For what*, or *wherefore, this?*) **let me find grace in the sight of my lord**—meaning either, I am satisfied, since thou art gracious to me (Vatablus), —*ἱκανὸν, ὅτι εὗρον χάριν ἐναντίον σου, κύριε* (LXX.); *hoc uno tantum indigeo, ut inveniam gratiam in conspectu tuo* (Vulgate),—or, be gracious to me in this also, and leave none of thy followers (Ainsworth, Patrick), though the two clauses might perhaps be connected thus: "Wherefore do I thus find grace in the eyes of my lord?" (Kalisch).

Vers. 16, 17.—**So** (literally, *and*, complying with his brother's request) **Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir**—from which he had come to meet Jacob (*vide* ch. xxxii. 3). **And Jacob journeyed to Succoth.** Succoth, so called here by anticipation, and afterwards belonging to the tribe of Gad, was situated in the valley of the Jordan, on the east side of the river, and to the south of the Jabbok (Josh. xiii. 27; Judges viii. 4, 5), and consequently is not to be identified with Sakût, on the western side of the Jordan, ten miles north of the Jabbok, and opposite the Wady Yâbis (Robinson, vol. iii. p. 175; Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 456); but is to be sought for at the ford opposite the Wady-el-Fariah, "down which the little stream from Shechem drains into the Jordan" (Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 144; Porter in Kitto's 'Cyclop.,' art. Succoth; cf. Keil and Kalisch *in loco*). **And built him an house.** This was an indication that Jacob purposed some considerable stay at Succoth; and, indeed, if a period of repose was not now demanded by the state of Jacob's health after his long servitude with Laban, his exhausting conflict with the angel, and his exciting interview with Esau (Lange), an interval of some years appears to be imperatively required by the exigencies of the ensuing narrative concerning Dinah, who could not at this time have been much over six years of age (Murphy, Alford, Gosman, *et alii*). **And made booths for his cattle.** Porter states that he has frequently seen such booths (Succoth, from *saccac*, to entwine) occupied by the Bedâwin of the Jordan valley, and describes them as rude huts of reeds, sometimes covered with long grass, and sometimes with a piece of tent (*vide* Kitto's 'Cyclop.,' *ut supra*). **Therefore the name of the place is called** (literally, *he called the name of the place*) **Succoth**—*i. e.* booths.

Ver. 18.—**And Jacob** (leaving Succoth) **came to Shalem**—the word שָׁלֵם, rendered by some expositors as here (LXX., Vulgate, Syriac, Luther, Calvin, Poole, Wordsworth), is better taken as an adverb signifying in peace or in safety (Onkelos, Saadias, Rashi, Dathius, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*), meaning that Jacob was now sound in his limb (Jarchi) and safe in his person, being no more endangered by Esau (Gerundensis in Drusius), or that he had hitherto met with no misfortune, though soon to encounter one in the instance of Dinah (Patrick), or that the expectations of Jacob expressed in ch. xxviii. 21 (to which there is an obvious allusion) were now fulfilled (Keil)—**a city of Shechem,**—if Shalem be the name of the town, then probably Shechem is the name of the person referred to in ch. xxxiv. 2, viz., the son of Hamor the Hivite (Drusius, Poole); but if Shalem mean *incolumis*, then the present clause must be rendered "to the city of Shechem," the city being already built and named—**which is in the land of Canaan,**—Bush thinks that Jacob had originally contemplated entering Canaan from the south after rounding the Dead Sea, probably with a view to reach Beersheba, but that, after his interview with Esau, he suddenly altered his route, and entered Canaan directly by crossing the Jordan and driving up his flocks and herds to Shechem, the first halting-place of Abraham (*vide* ch. xii. 6), which may perhaps lend additional interest to, if they do not explain, the words that follow—**when he came from Padan-aram** (as Abraham previously had done); **and** (he) **pitched his tent before the city**—because he did not wish to come in contact with the inhabitants (Lyra), or because his flocks and herds could not find accommodation within the city walls (Murphy), or perhaps simply for convenience of pasturage (Patrick).

Ver. 19.—**And he bought a parcel of a field,**—literally, *the portion* (from a root signifying to divide) *of the field*—**where he had spread his tent,**—and in which he afterwards sank a well (cf. John iv. 6)—**at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father** (after whom the town was named, *ut supra*), **for an hundred pieces of money**—or kesitahs, the etymology of which is uncer-

tain (Kalisch), though connected by some philologists (Gesenius, Fürst) with *kasat*, to weigh; translated lambs (Onkelos, LXX., Vulgate), but believed to have been a certain weight now unknown (Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 2207), or a piece of money of a definite value, perhaps the price of a lamb (Murphy), which, like the shekel, was used for purposes of commercial exchange by the patriarchs (Gesenius)—probably a coin stamped with the figure of a lamb (Bochart, Münter); but coined money does not appear to have been of so great antiquity (Rosenmüller, Wordsworth, Alford).

Ver. 20.—**And he erected there an altar,** —as Abram his ancestor had done (ch. xii. 7)—**and called it**—not invoked upon it, *invocavit super illud* (Vulgate), ἐπεκαλέσατο (LXX.), but named it (Dathe, Rosenmüller, Keil, &c.)—**El-elohe-Israel**—*i. e.* God, the God of Israel; meaning, he called it the altar of God, the God of Israel (Rosenmüller), or, reading *el* as a preposition, "To the God of Israel" (Quarry, p. 508).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—20.—*Jacob and Esau, or the brothers reconciled.* I. THE MEETING OF THE BROTHERS. 1. *The approach of Esau.* (1) Conscious of his greatness, being attended by 400 armed followers; (2) thirsting for revenge, remembering the wrongs he had endured at Jacob's hands; (3) longing to see his brother, from whom he had been parted now for upwards of twenty years. It is probable that a l three emotions—pride, anger, affection—swelled within the breast of my lord Esau, struggling to obtain the mastery. Which of them should conquer another moment would decide. 2. *The advance of Jacob.* (1) With commendable caution, dividing his company into three several groups—first the handmaids and their boys, next Leah and her children, and last Rachel and Joseph; (2) with rare chivalry, placing himself in front of the foremost, which may be placed to his account as a set-off against his supposed partiality to Rachel and Joseph; (3) with profound respect, bowing and advancing seven times, with true Oriental politeness, until he came to Esau. 3. *The reconciliation of both.* The conflict of emotions in the breast of Esau was brought to a decision by the sight of Jacob, which at once cast the balance on the side of fraternal affection. Old memories of boyhood and home revived in the bosom of the stalwart hunter as he looked on his twin-brother, and, under the impulse of generous and noble feeling, he ran and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Nor was the heart of Jacob less susceptible of such tender emotion. Reciprocating his manly brother's embrace, he too yielded to a rush of kindly sentiment, and they both wept. What a study for a painter! Cf. Jonathan and David (1 Sam. xx. 41), and the prodigal and his father (Luke xv. 20).

II. THE CONVERSE OF THE BROTHERS. 1. *Esau's inquiries and Jacob's answers.* (1) Esau asks about the women and the children in Jacob's train; and Jacob, piously acknowledging the Divine hand that had surrounded him with so many precious objects of affection, instructs them to do obeisance to their kinsman, which with beautiful politeness, following his own courteous example, they do. It bespeaks a devout heart when domestic as well as other blessings are traced to the all-bountiful Giver, a well-ordered home when its inmates imitate the good conduct of its head, and a fine sensibility when the claims of relatives to courtesy and kindness are recognised and honoured. (2) Esau requests to be informed about the droves which he had met, and Jacob explains that he had sent them as a present to conciliate his favour. At first declining with a praiseworthy magnanimity to deprive his brother of any of his hard-earned wealth, Esau is afterwards constrained to accept the proffered gift, on learning that Jacob would not otherwise be sure of his forgiveness and friendship. It is beautiful when brothers emulate each other in noble acts. 2. *Esau's invitations and Jacob's promise.* It appears most satisfactory to understand Esau as soliciting his brother to accompany him to Seir, where for the time he was residing, and Jacob as engaging to drive on slowly after the roving chieftain, according as the tender age of his children and the condition of his flocks and herds would admit, with the view of ultimately paying him a visit in his mountain home; but whether he fulfilled that promise now or afterwards, or at all, cannot be ascertained. If he did not, we may rest satisfied that he had good reasons for breaking his word, which, alas, promise-breakers seldom have. 3. *Esau's offer and*

Jacob's declinature. Esau anxiously desires to leave a convoy of his troopers to assist his brother in the further prosecution of his journey; but Jacob with respectful firmness refused to accept of his kindness—perhaps because, being a man of peace, he did not care for the society of soldiers, but chiefly, we apprehend, because, having Jehovah as a guide, he did not need the help of roving buccaneers (cf. Ezra viii. 22).

III. THE PARTING OF THE BROTHERS. 1. *Esau returned unto Mount Seir.* (1) Immediately, that day; but (2) not as yet finally, since his ultimate withdrawal from the land of Canaan appears to have taken place at a subsequent period. 2. *Jacob journeyed to Succoth,* where he built himself a house, constructed booths for his cattle, and remained a considerable time, *afterwards moving up to Shechem,* where he (1) pitched his tent outside the city, for convenience or for safety; (2) purchased a field from the chief man of the place, honestly paying for his purchase, as became a just man; and (3) erected an altar, which he named El-elohe-Israel.

See here—1. The strength of fraternal affection. 2. The beauty of forgiveness and reconciliation. 3. The possibility of combining politeness and piety. 4. The power of kindness in disarming enmity and opposition. 5. The advantage of conference for promoting good understanding and exciting kindly feeling. 6. The tender care which the strong should exercise towards the weak. 7. The sad partings which Providence effects between friends. 8. The propriety of taking God with us on all our journeys. 9. The duty of affectionately remembering God's mercies.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxxiii.—*The fruits of prayer.* The "*prince*" who has been lifted by the grace of God out of the humiliation of his fear and shame to the height of his favour at the throne of the Most High now reveals his princely power. He takes captive Esau's heart; he blesses him in the name of God, he bestows his gifts upon him. Notice the *fruits of Divine discipline in the patriarch.*

I. THE THEOCRATIC FEELING IS ALIVE IN JACOB'S HEART. He puts the handmaids first, Leah next, Rachel and Joseph hindermost. He placed them in the order of his own affection; but it represented also the Divine order, for it was in Joseph that the kingdom of God was about to be especially manifested. "I have seen thy face," he said to Esau, "as though I had seen the face of God." He saw the favour of God going on before him, and like the sunshine it rested on the face of the enemy, and cast out the darkness and turned it into light.

II. Jacob's entire STEADFASTNESS AS A SERVANT OF GOD and believer in the covenant. Seen in his refusal to mingle his family and people with those of Esau.

III. SPECIAL GRACE MEETS THE TRUE SERVANT. "*Succoth*" is better than "*Seir;*" and it is *on the way to "Shalem," peace.* There it is that the patriarch finds *rest,* and *builds an altar,* calling it "*El-elohe-Israel.*" Not merely an *altar to God,* but to him who had *revealed himself* as the *faithful God,* the *God of Israel,* the *God of his people.*—R.

Ver. 12.—*Worldly companionship.* "And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee." The offer probably made with kindly intention. No sign of bitterness in Esau's feelings; but ignorance of the necessities of Jacob's march. Jacob knew it was not possible with safety (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 4; 1 Pet. iv. 4). Reminds us of the attitude of many worldly persons towards Christians. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Yet worldly men may have sincere regard for Christian men; bear unconscious testimony to excellence of Christianity. And here a danger to Christians. Let us journey together. I like you; you are unselfish, trustworthy. And why not? Because in journeying with Esau he must be leader, or he would cease to be Esau. The world's good-will does not mean a changed heart. Without any pronounced dislike to higher aims, it shares them not, and knows not anything more real than earth. There is a journey we all take in company: in the thousand ways in which men are dependent on each other; in the courtesies and good offices of life; in what belongs to our position as citizens or family men. But in what constitutes the road of life—its stamp and direction, its

motives and aims—no union. We have another Leader (Heb. xii. 2). The pillar of fire led Israelites not according to human judgment.

I. THIS DOES NOT IMPLY KEEPING ALOOF FROM MEN, OR FROM HUMAN INTERESTS. We are called to be the salt of the earth. It is an error to shrink from contact with the world as dangerous to us. This of old led to monasticism. But there may be a spiritual solitude even when living in the throng of a city. In secular matters refusing to take an interest in what occupies others (cf. Luke vi. 31), as if God had nothing to do with these; or in spiritual things avoiding Christian intercourse with those who do not in all points agree with us; or being engrossed with our own spiritual welfare, and turning away from all concern for the welfare of others (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 20—22).

II. IT DOES IMPLY A REAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF BEING REDEEMED, set free, bought with a price; OF HAVING A DEFINITE WORK TO DO FOR GOD, WITH WHICH NOTHING MUST INTERFERE; a real way to walk in, from which nothing must make us turn aside. And in order to this, watchfulness over self, that in seeking to help others we ourselves are not ensnared.

III. SOME WAYS IN WHICH THE WORLD IN ITS FRIENDSHIP TEMPTS CHRISTIANS. 1. By the plea, there is no harm in this or that. We must not think that all actions can be brought to an absolute standard of right and wrong. This is the spirit of legality, the spirit of bondage, and leads to partial service instead of entire dedication (cf. Luke xv. 29). Loyalty to Christ must direct the Christian's life; desire not merely to avoid direct disobedience, but to use our time and powers for him who loved us and gave himself for us. 2. By the display of good feelings as the equivalent of Christian graces. Esau's kindliness and frankness are very attractive. Yet he was a "profane person;" not because of his anger or any sinful act, but because he thought little of God's blessing. 3. By making Christians familiar with worldly aims and maxims, and thus insensibly blunting their spiritual aspirations. The way of safety is through prayer for the Holy Spirit's help, to maintain the consciousness of Christ's presence.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Ver. 1.—**And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob,**—if Dinah was born before Joseph (ch. xxx. 21) she was probably in her seventh year when Jacob reached Succoth (ch. xxxiii. 17); but it does not follow that she was only six or seven years of age when the incident about to be described occurred (Tuch, Bohlen). If Jacob stayed two years at Succoth and eight in Shechem (Petavius), and if, as is probable, his residence in Shechem terminated with his daughter's dishonour (Lange), and if, moreover, Joseph's sale into Egypt happened soon after (Hengstenberg), Dinah may at this time have been in her sixteenth or seventeenth year (Kurtz). Yet there is no reason why she should not have been younger, say between thirteen and fifteen (Keil, Lange, Kalisch, Murphy, *et alii*), since in the East females attain to puberty at the age of twelve, and sometimes earlier (Delitzsch)—**went out**—it is not implied that this was the first occasion on which Dinah left her mother's tent to mingle with the city maidens in Shechem: the expression is equivalent to "once upon a time she went out" (Hengstenberg)—**to see the daughters of the land**—who were gathered at a festive entertainment (Josephus, 'Ant.,' i. 21, 1), a not improbable supposition (Kurtz), though the language rather indicates the paying of a friendly visit (Lange), or the habitual practice of associating with the Shechemite women (Bush), in their social entertainments, if not in their religious festivals.

Ver. 2.—**And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the country, saw her** (literally, *and Shechem . . . saw her, and*) **he took her.** "Dinah paid the full penalty of her carelessness. She suffered the fate which Sarah and Rebekah encountered in the land of Pharaoh and Abimelech; she was seen and taken by the son of the prince" (Kalisch); forcibly, *i. e.* against her will in the first instance, though not, it is apparent, without the blandishments of a lover. **And lay with her, and defiled her**—literally, *oppressed her*, offered violence to her, whence humbled her—*ἐταπείνωσεν* (LXX.), *vi opprimens* (Vulgate).

Vers. 3, 4.—**And his soul clave** (*vide infra* on ver. 8) **unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob,**—it was in some degree an extenuation of the wickedness of Shechem that he did not cast off the victim of his violence and lust, but continued to regard her with affection—

and he loved the damsel,—on the use of *na'ar* for a youth of either sex *vide* ch. xxiv. 14—**and spake kindly unto the damsel**—literally, *spoke to the heart of the damsel*, ἐλάλησε κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν τῆς παρθένου αὐτῇ (LXX.), *i. e.* addressed to her such words as were agreeable to her inclinations (cf. on the import of the phrase ch. l. 21; Judges xix. 3; Isa. xl. 2; Hosea ii. 14), probably expressing his affection, and offering the reparation of honourable marriage, as may be legitimately inferred from what is next recorded of his behaviour. **And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife**—cf. the case of Samson (Judges xiv. 2).

Ver. 5.—**And Jacob heard**—most likely from some of Dinah's companions (Patrick), since she herself was still detained in Shechem's house (ver. 26)—**that he** (Hamor's son) **had defiled**—the verb here employed conveys the idea of rendering unclean (cf. vers. 13, 27; Numb. xix. 13; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Ps. lxxix. 1; that in ver. 2 expresses the notion of violence)—**Dinah his daughter.** It was an aggravation of Shechem's wickedness that it was perpetrated not against any of Jacob's handmaids, but against his daughter. **Now** (literally, *and*) **his sons were with his cattle in the field**—perhaps that which he had lately purchased (ch. xxxiii. 19), or in some pasture ground more remote from the city. **And Jacob held his peace**—literally, *acted as one dumb*, i. e. maintained silence upon the painful subject, and took no measures to avenge Shechem's crime (cf. ch. xxiv. 21; 1 Sam. x. 27; 2 Sam. xiii. 22); either through sorrow (Ainsworth, Calvin), or through caution (Murphy, Lange), or through perplexity, as not knowing how to act (Kalisch), or as recognising the right of his sons by the same mother to have a voice in the settlement of so important a question (Kurtz, Gerlach), to which undoubtedly the next clause points—**until they were come**—literally, *until their coming*.

Ver. 6.—**And** (meantime) **Hamor the father of Shechem went out**—accompanied by Shechem (ver. 11)—**unto Jacob**—who was encamped in the outskirts of the city (ch. xxxiii. 18)—**to commune with him** concerning Dinah's marriage with his son.

Ver. 7.—**And the sons of Jacob** (*i. e.* Leah's children, Dinah's full brothers, for certain, though perhaps also her half brothers) **came out of the field when they heard** it (Jacob having probably sent them word): **and the men were grieved,**—literally, *grieved themselves*, or became pained with anger, the verb being the hithpael of עָצַב, to toil or labour with pain. The LXX. connect this with the preceding clause, ὡς δὲ ἤκουσαν, κατενύγησαν οἱ ἄνδρες, implying that they did not learn of their sister's seduction till they came home—**and they were very wroth,**—literally, *it burned to them greatly* (cf. ch. xxxi. 36; 1 Sam. xv. 11; 2 Sam. xix. 43). Michaelis mentions an opinion still entertained in the East which explains the excessive indignation kindled in the breasts of Dinah's brothers, viz., that "in those countries it is thought that a brother is more dishonoured by the seduction of his sister than a man by the infidelity of his wife; for, say the Arabs, a man may divorce his wife, and then she is no longer his; while a sister and daughter remain always sister and daughter" (*vide* Kurtz, 'Hist. of Old Covenant,' § 82)—**because he** (*i. e.* Shechem)—**had wrought folly**—the term *folly* easily passes into the idea of wickedness of a shameful character (1 Sam. xxv. 25; 2 Sam. xiii. 12), since from the standpoint of Scripture sin is the height of unreason (Ps. lxxiv. 22; Jer. xvii. 11), and holiness the sublimest act of wisdom (Ps. cxi. 10; Prov. i. 4)—**in** (or against) **Israel**—the word, here applied for the first time to Jacob's household, afterwards became the usual national designation of Jacob's descendants; and the phrase here employed for the first time afterwards passed into a standing expression for acts done against the sacred character which belonged to Israel as a separated and covenanted community, especially for sins of the flesh (Deut. xxii. 21; Judges xx. 10; Jer. xxix. 23), but also for other crimes (Josh. vii. 15)—**in lying with Jacob's daughter.** The special wickedness of Shechem consisted in dishonouring a daughter of one who was the head of the theocratic line, and therefore under peculiar obligations to lead a holy life. **Which thing ought not to be done**—literally, *and so is it not done* (cf. ch. xxix. 26). Assigned to the historian ('Speaker's Commentary'), or to the hand of a late redactor (Davidson, Colenso, Alford), there is no reason why these words should not have been spoken by Jacob's sons (Keil, Murphy, and others) to indicate their sense of the new and higher morality that had come in with the name of Israel (Lange).

Vers. 8—10.—**And Hamor communed** (literally, *spake*) **with them** (*i. e.* the whole family, or Jacob and his sons), **saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for**—the root (חָשַׁק) signifies to join together, intrans., to be joined together, hence to cleave to another in love (cf. Deut. vii. 7, 10, 15; xxi. 11); of similar import to the word (דָּבַק) employed in ver. 3, which means to be devotedly attached to any one, as, *e. g.*, to God (Deut. x. 20), to a king (2 Sam. xx. 2), to a wife (1 Kings xi. 2)—**your daughter.** The words are addressed to Jacob's sons as well as Jacob himself, the brothers equally with the father being regarded as the natural guardians of a sister. **I pray you give her**

him to wife. The absence of any apology for Shechem's atrocious outrage against Dinah need not be regarded as indicating some measure of consent on the part of Dinah, but may be explained on the supposition that Hamor's proposal was considered by himself as a practical admission of his son's guilt. **And make ye marriages with us,**—literally, *contract affinity with us by marriage*, the verb *chathan* being spoken of the father-in-law (*chothen*), who makes the alliance (*vide* Fürst, 'Lex.,' *sub voce*)—**and give your daughters unto us,**—from this it has been inferred that Jacob had other daughters besides Dinah, which is not improbable (ch. xlvi. 7), but the words may not imply more than that Hamor thought he had—**and take our daughters unto you. And** (as an inducement to form this alliance) **ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein**—*i. e.* he offers them the privilege of unrestricted movement throughout his dominions, with the right of establishing settlements, carrying on trade, and acquiring property.

Vers. 11, 12.—**And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren** (speaking with becoming deference and earnestness, and manifestly prompted by fervent and sincere love), **Let me find grace in your eyes,**—*i. e.* let my suit be accepted (*vide* ch. xxxiii. 15)—**and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift,**—literally, *multiply upon me exceedingly dowry and gift;* the dowry (*mohar*) being the price paid for a wife to her parents (cf. Exod. xxii. 16; 1 Sam. xviii. 25), and the gift (*mathan*) the presents given to the bride (Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller, Gerlach, Alford); or the dowry being the bride's present, and the gift the wife's price (Michaelis, Keil, Murphy); or the dowry being given to the parents, and the gift to the kindred (Patrick); or the two being the same thing, viz., the compensation offered to the relatives of the bride (Lange)—**and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give** (or, and ye will give) **me the damsel to wife.**

Vers. 13—17.—**And the sons of Jacob** (manifestly without the knowledge of their father) **answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said,**—the object of the verb *said* is to be found in the next verse, "we cannot do this thing," the clause commencing "because" being parenthetical (Rosenmüller, Fürst), so that it is unnecessary either to take דָּבַר in the unusual sense of *dolos struere* (Schultens, Gesenius, Keil), or to supply after *said* "with deceit" from the preceding clause (Onkelos, Ainsworth, Murphy, *et alii*)—**because he had defiled Dinah their sister** (to be taken parenthetically, as already explained): **and they said unto them** (these words revert to the preceding verse), **We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised** (*vide* ch. xvii. 11); **for that were a reproach unto us.** The ground on which they declined a matrimonial alliance with Shechem was good; their sin lay in advancing this simply as a pretext to enable them to wreak their unholy vengeance on Shechem and his innocent people. The treacherous character of their next proposal is difficult to be reconciled with any claim to humanity, far less to religion, on the part of Jacob's sons; so much so, that Jacob on his death-bed can offer no palliation for the atrocious cruelty to which it led (ch. xlix. 6, 7). **But in this** (*i. e.* under this condition) **will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised** (literally, *to have circumcision administered to you every male*); **then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us** (*i. e.* to be our wives), **and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.** This proposal was sinful, since (1) they had no right to offer the sign of God's covenant to a heathen people; (2) they had less right to employ it in ratification of a merely human agreement; and (3) they had least right of all to employ it in duplicity as a mask for their treachery. **But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then** (rather, *sc.* then we will not consent to your proposal, and) **we will take our daughter,**—who was still in Shechem's house (ver. 26)—**and we will be gone.**

Vers. 18, 19.—**And their words pleased** (literally, *were good in the eyes of*) **Hamor, and** (literally, *in the eyes of*) **Shechem, Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not** (*i. e.* delayed not) **to do the thing** (literally, *the word*, i. e. to submit to circumcision. This is stated here by anticipation), **because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable**—literally, *more honoured*, doubtless because more worthy of regard (cf. 1 Chron. iv. 9)—**than all the house of his father.**

Vers. 20—23.—**And Hamor and Shechem his son came** (or went) **unto the gate of their city** (*vide* on ch. xix. 2; xxiii. 10), **and communed with** (or spake to) **the men of their city, saying, These men** (*i. e.* Jacob and his sons) **are peaceable with us** (literally, *peaceable are they with us.* This is the first argument employed by Hamor and Shechem to secure the consent of the citizens to the formation of an alliance with Jacob and his sons); **therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein;**—literally, *and they will dwell in the land, and trade in it* (*sc.* if you permit)—**for** (literally, *and*) **the land, behold, it is large enough**—literally, *broad of hands*, i. e. on both sides (cf. Isa.

xxxiii. 21; Ps. civ. 25)—**for them** (literally, *before them*, i. e. for them to wander about with their flocks and herds. This was the second argument employed by Hamor and his son); **let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein** (or under this condition) **will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised** (literally, *in the circumcising to or by us of every male*), **as they are circumcised.** After which statement of the indispensable condition of the alliance proposed, they advance as a third argument for its acceptance the material advantages which such an alliance would inevitably secure for them. **Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs** (the *mikneh* refer to flocks and herds; the *behemah* to asses and camels) **be ours?** —literally, *Shall not these* (be) *to us?*—**only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.**

Ver. 24.—**And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city.** The ready acquiescence of the Shechemites to the proposal of Jacob's sons has not unreasonably been regarded as a proof that they were already acquainted with circumcision as a social, if not religious, rite (Kurtz, Keil, &c.). **And every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.** Knobel notes it as remarkable that the Hivites were not circumcised, since, according to Herodotus, the rite was observed among the Phenicians, and probably also the Canaanites, who were of the same extraction, and thinks that either the rite was not universally observed in any of these ancient nations where it was known, or that the Hivites were originally a different race from the Canaanites, and had not conformed to the customs of the land (*vide* Lange *in loco*). Murphy thinks the present instance may point out one way in which the custom spread from tribe to tribe.

Ver. 25.—**And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore,**—literally, *in their being in pain;* ὅτε ἦσαν ἐν τῷ πόνῳ (LXX.). Inflammation and fever commonly set in on the third day, which was for that reason regarded as the critical day—**that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren** (*i. e.* sons of the same mother, Leah), **took each man his sword, and came upon the city**—accompanied by their servants (Keil), or their father's men (Murphy), but this is doubtful (Lange). That the other sons of Jacob and brethren of Dinah did not pursue their thirst for vengeance to the same extremity as Simeon and Levi seems apparent from ver. 27; yet it is quite possible that they joined with Simeon and Levi in the assault upon the city (Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary') which they made—**boldly,**—*i. e.* either they themselves feeling confident of success because of the sickness which lay upon the inhabitants (Ainsworth, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Murphy, &c.), or, while the city was lulled into security in consequence of the treaty (Onkelos, Josephus, Keil, Lange), or perhaps referring only to the fact that they encountered no opposition, and came in safety (ἀσφαλῶς) to the city (LXX., Kalisch)—**and slew all the males.** Probably the town was small.

Ver. 26.—**And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge** (literally, *the mouth*) **of the sword,**—without excusing the inhuman barbarity of this remorseless massacre, Kurtz offers an elaborate and interesting analysis of the complex motive of which it was the outcome, in particular showing how in Jacob's sons that strange admixture of religious zeal and carnal passion, of lofty faith and low craft, existed which formed so large a portion of the character of the patriarch himself (*vide* 'Hist. of the Old Covenant,' vol. i. § 82)—**and took Dinah out of Shechem's house,**—in which up to this time she had been detained against her will (Alford), though this may be open to question (Kalisch)—**and went out.**

Vers. 27—29.—**The sons of Jacob**—not all except Simeon and Levi (Delitzsch), nor Simeon and Levi alone (Kalisch, Inglis), but Simeon and Levi along with the others (Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange)—**came upon the slain,** —the absence of the ו conjunctive at the commencement of this verse, which partitionists account for by the hypothesis that vers. 27—29 are an interpolation, is explained by Keil as designed to express the subjective excitement and indignation of the historian at the revolting character of the crime he was narrating—**and spoiled the city, because they** (*i. e.* the inhabitants being regarded, on the well-known principle of the solidarity of nations, as involved in the crime of their ruler) **had defiled their sister,** and so exposed themselves to reprisals, in which **they** (*i. e.* the sons of Jacob) **took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones,**—*taph*, a collective noun for boys and girls, who are so called from their brisk and tripping motion (Gesenius)—**and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.** The words describe a complete sacking of the city, in which every house was swept of its inmates and its valuables.

Ver. 30.—**And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me** (*i. e.* brought trouble upon me) **to make me to stink**—or, to cause me to become hateful; μισητόν με πεποιήκατε (LXX.)—**among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the**

Perizzites (*vide* ch. xiii. 7): **and I** (*sc.* with my attendants) being **few in number,**—literally, *men of number*, i. e. that can be easily numbered, a small band (cf. Deut. iv. 27; Ps. cv. 12; Jer. xliv. 28)—**they** (literally, *and they*) **shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.** That Jacob should have spoken to his sons only of his own danger, and not of their guilt, has been ascribed to his belief that this was the only motive which their carnal minds could understand (Keil, Gerlach); to a remembrance of his own deceitfulness, which disqualified him in a measure from being the censor of his sons (Kalisch, Wordsworth); to the lowered moral and spiritual tone of his own mind (Candlish, 'Speaker's Commentary'); to the circumstance that, having indulged his children in their youth, he was now afraid to reprove them (Inglis). That Jacob afterwards attained to a proper estimate of their bloody deed his last prophetic utterance reveals (ch. xlix. 5—7). By some it is supposed that he even now felt the crime in all its heinousness (Kalisch), though his reproach was somewhat leniently expressed in the word "trouble" (Lange); while others, believing Jacob's abhorrence of his sons' fanatical cruelty to have been deep and real, account for its omission by the historian on the ground that he aimed merely at showing "the protection of God (ch. xxxv. 5), through which Jacob escaped the evil consequences of their conduct" (Hengstenberg, Kurtz).

Ver. 31.—**And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?** But Shechem offered Dinah honourable marriage.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—31.—*The tragedy at Shechem.* I. DINAH AND SHECHEM. 1. *A young girl's indiscretion.* "Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land." If Dinah's object was to witness the manners of the people, she was guilty of objectionable curiosity; if to exhibit herself, of distressing vanity; if to mingle in their entertainments, of improper levity; and for all these reasons, considering the character of the family to which she belonged, and the wickedness of the people with whom she mingled, of exceedingly heinous sin. 2. *A young prince's wickedness.* Shechem saw her, and took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. The sin of Shechem had many aggravations. It was done by a prince, whose very rank should have preserved him from such degradation. Those whom God makes elevated in station should make themselves eminent in virtue. Goodness should always accompany greatness. Then it was done without the least excuse, since Shechem was at liberty by God's law and man's to have a wife whenever he desired. Again, it was done against a young and comparatively helpless girl whom circumstances had placed within his power. Further, it was done in violation of the laws of hospitality, which required him to protect, rather than to injure, a stranger's good name. And, lastly, it was done to one belonging to a family whose members were invested with a high degree of sanctity. Still the crime of Shechem was not without its extenuations. First, he loved the maiden whom he had dishonoured. Second, he offered the reparation of an honourable marriage. Third, he treated her with kindness while he detained her in his palace.

II. JACOB AND HIS SONS. 1. *The impression made on Jacob by Dinah's misfortune.* (1) He held his peace; in stupefaction, in sorrow, in meditation, in indecision. (2) He sent for his sons, who, as recognised guardians of their sister, were entitled to be consulted in all that concerned her welfare. 2. *The effect produced on Jacob's sons by their sister's shame.* (1) They were grieved for what had happened—for Dinah's, for their father's, for their own sake. (2) They were angry at its perpetrator; not so much, however, for the sin he had committed, as for the fact that he had committed it against Jacob's daughter.

III. JACOB'S SONS AND HAMOR'S SON. 1. *The honourable proposal of Shechem.* First through the medium of his father, and afterwards in his own person, he solicits Jacob and his sons to give him Dinah in marriage, and to enter in turn into matrimonial alliances with them, offering as an inducement unrestricted liberty to settle, trade, and acquire property in the land, and promising to pay whatever dowry or gift might be demanded for the damsel. 2. *The deceitful reply of Jacob's sons.* First they declared it impossible that Dinah should become the wife of one who was uncircumcised. Then they consented to the proposition on condition that Hamor, Shechem, and the Shechemites would submit to circumcision. And yet all the while it was only part of a deep-laid plot for exacting revenge.

IV. Hamor and the Shechemites. 1. *The condition prescribed by Jacob's sons explained.* This was done by the ruling sovereign and the crown prince in a public assembly convened at the city gate. 2. *The condition accepted by the Shechemites.* Trusting to the good faith of the Hebrew strangers, they assented to the proposition that all the male inhabitants should be circumcised, and in good faith it was carried out by both prince and people.

V. The sons of Jacob and the Shechemites. 1. *The massacre of the inhabitants by Dinah's brethren.* Three days after, when, in consequence of the painful operation to which they had submitted, the male part of the population was unable to stir in their defence, Simeon and Levi, confident of success in their nefarious deed, fell upon the unsuspecting city, and slew all the males. It was a heartless, ruthless, treacherous, diabolic massacre, fit to rank with the St. Bartholomews and Glencoes of modern times. 2. *The spoliation of the city by Jacob's sons.* If Simeon and Levi were alone responsible for the massacre, the sacking of the city was the work of all the brethren (Joseph and Benjamin doubtless excepted). Not only did they make captives of the wives and children, but they carried off every live thing they could find of any value; and not only did they ransack the houses, from the palace to the cottage, but they appear to have stripped even the very dead. The annals of uncivilised warfare scarcely record a more atrocious crime.

VI. Jacob and Dinah's brethren. 1. *The feeble reproof of Jacob.* He only complains that their cruel deed would cause his name to be abhorred in the land, and perhaps lead to their extermination as a people. For the different views that have been entertained of Jacob's words the Exposition may be consulted. 2. *The insufficient reply of Dinah's brethren.* Shechem certainly had wronged Dinah, but he never meant to treat her as a harlot.

Learn—1. The danger of unrestrained social intercourse between the Church and the world in general, and in particular between the daughters of the pious and the sons of the ungodly—exemplified in Dinah, who, going to see the daughters of the land, lost her fair fame, and brought trouble on her father's house. 2. The misery of yielding to unholy passion—illustrated in Shechem, whose unbridled lust bore bitter fruit to all concerned: to Dinah dishonour, to Jacob shame and sorrow, to Jacob's sons the thirst for revenge, to Hamor and the Shechemites as well as to himself overwhelming retribution. 3. The wickedness of which good men when left to themselves may be guilty—exhibited in the conduct of Jacob's sons, who in this lamentable affair were chargeable with treachery, sacrilege, murder, spoliation, oppression. 4. The possibility of the innocent suffering with and for the guilty—shown in the massacre of the Shechemites for the sin of Shechem. 5. The certainty that a man's worst foes are often those of his own household—of which the case of Jacob was a melancholy instance, whose name was more dishonoured by his sons' atrocities than by his daughter's misfortune.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxxiv.—*Good out of evil.* The whole of this miserable story has its place in the development of the kingdom of God. No alliance can be true and safe which is not upon the foundation of the Divine covenants. Circumcision without faith is a mere carnal ordinance, working evil. The sin of Shechem was avenged, but it was avenged by the commission of a greater sin by Simeon and Levi. It was not thus that the kingdom of God was to be spread. "Ye have troubled me," Jacob said. And so have all worldly agencies and methods troubled the true Church. It is better to suffer at the hands of the wicked than to make compromising alliance with them. The worldly Church has filled the world with misery. Abuse of Divine things has been the source of innumerable evils, not only among the people of God, but even in the sphere of men's secular life. But notwithstanding the sin of Simeon and Levi, their prompt execution of the Divine judgment upon the sin of Shechem must have produced a wholesome fear in the country, and connected that fear with moral purity. The sins of unchastity and violation of family rights were monstrously prevalent among the heathen people of Canaan, and it was doubtless ordered that this outbreak of human passion should bear witness for God as the God of purity and the God of

households, who blesses the life which is free from the defilement of sensual indulgence, and in which the bonds of relationship and virtuous marriages and the sanctities of home are deeply reverenced. We read afterwards (ch. xxxv. 5), "the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them."—R.

Ver. 30.—*Anger unrestrained.* "And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me." It was not merely the fear of retaliation by neighbouring tribes. He felt the act was wrong (ch. xlix. 5—7); God's blessing could not rest upon it (cf. Ps. xxxiv. 7); and he and his family were involved in that wrong (cf. Josh. vii. 13; 1 Cor. xii. 26). But was not the anger of Simeon and Levi just? No doubt there was cause, and no doubt a measure of righteous indignation. But (1) they thought more of the wrong against themselves than of the sin against God (ver. 31). (2) Their anger was unrestrained by mercy, or even by justice (ver. 25). (3) It led them into acts of sin—deceit, murder, robbery. (4) It was soiled by selfish gain (ver. 27). Anger may be right; but need of special watchfulness (Ephes. iv. 26). For under its influence the heart is not in a state fitted to judge; and much danger of self-deception, of mistaking a selfish for a godly anger.

I. A JUST CAUSE FOR ANGER DOES NOT EXCUSE ITS EXCESS. Anger may be called for (1) as a protest against wrong; (2) to deter others from wrong. But vengeance, retribution, belongs to God (Rom. xii. 19). He alone has the knowledge to apportion it, looking both to the past and to the future. But anger tempts to retaliation (Matt. v. 38). The wrong fills the mind. Our own errors and acts of wrong (cf. John viii. 7), and the plea, Thine anger brings harm to the innocent, are unheeded. The fact that there was cause for anger blinds to its real nature; for unrestrained anger is in truth an offering to self-love. The plea of zeal for right and of godly indignation may seem sincere; but "ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

II. A JUST CAUSE FOR ANGER DOES NOT EXCUSE WRONG-DOING. God's laws cannot be set aside. And he who takes on himself the office of judge should be especially watchful not to transgress (Ps. xxxvii. 3). To do wrong on the plea of doing God's work is to distrust his providential care (Rom. xii. 19—21). It is to do evil that good may come; a form of being drawn aside by our own lusts (cf. 1 Sam. xxiv. 7; xxvi. 9). Such acts of wrong are especially evil in Christians. They are "a city set on an hill." Men are ever ready to point to their errors as excusing their own. Men see and judge the act, but cannot estimate the provocation, or, it may be, the sorrow, for a hasty action.

III. WORKS DONE IN ANGER HINDER THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. That work is to draw men together in one (John xvii. 21). The power by which this is done is love. The love of Christ reflected in us (1 John iv. 7). Love wins men's hearts, reason only their minds. And the presence of anger hinders love; not merely in him against whom it is directed; like a stone thrown into still water, it disturbs its surface far and wide.

IV. THE POWER BY WHICH ANGER MUST BE CONTROLLED. Dwelling on the work and example of Christ. He bore all for us. Is not wrath rebuked in the presence of his patience? And if as a "strange work" we are constrained to indignation, must we not watch and pray that no selfish feeling may mingle with it; and, knowing in how many things we offend, that we be "slow to wrath," ready to forgive, and ever "looking unto Jesus"?—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Ver. 1.—**And God**—Elohim. The employment of this name for the Deity throughout the present chapter has been deemed conclusive evidence that, with some Jehovistic alterations, it belongs to the fundamental document (Tuch, Bleek, Delitzsch, Kalisch, *et alii*); but the frequent allusions to ch. xxviii. 13—16, which by partitionists is almost universally assigned to the Jehovist, prove that both sections have proceeded from the same author, and that, "though the mention of the name is avoided, this chapter, there is no doubt, substantially relates to Jehovah" (Hengstenberg), while the name Elohim may simply indicate that Jacob's journey from Shechem was undertaken in

obedience to a Divine intimation (Quarry)—**said unto Jacob** (shortly after the incidents recorded in the preceding chapter), **Arise, go up to Bethel,**—about thirty miles distant (ch. xii. 8; xiii. 3; xxviii. 19), to which, some thirty years previous, he had solemnly vowed to return (ch. xxviii. 22)—a vow which he appeared somewhat dilatory in performing, although its conditions had been exactly fulfilled (Keil, Kurtz, Kalisch, &c.)—**and dwell there** (the massacre of the Shechemites had obviously rendered longer residence in that neighbourhood unsafe): **and make there an altar**—this Jacob had substantially promised to do in his vow (*vide* ch. xxviii. 22)—**unto God, that appeared unto thee**—*i. e.* unto Jehovah (*vide* ch. xxviii. 13)—**when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.** The words contained an assurance that the same Divine arm which had shielded him against the enmity of Esau and the oppression of Laban would extend to him protection on his future way.

Vers. 2, 3.—**Then Jacob said unto his household** (*i. e.* those more immediately belonging to his family), **and to all that were with him** (referring probably to the captured Shechemites), **Put away the strange gods**—literally, *the gods of the stranger*, including most likely the teraphim of Laban, which Rachel still retained, and other objects of idolatrous worship, either brought by Jacob's servants from Mesopotamia, or adopted in Canaan, or perhaps possessed by the captives—**that are among you, and be clean,**—literally, *cleanse yourselves*. The word is that which afterwards describes the purifications of the law (Numb. xix. 11, 12; Levit. xiv. 4; xv. 13). Aben Ezra interprets it as meaning that they washed their bodies; and Michaelis views the rite as a kind of baptism, signifying their adoption of the true religion of Jehovah—a quasi baptism of repentance, like that afterwards preached by John (*vide* 'Suppl.,' p. 1000)—**and change your garments.** The directions here given are very similar to those which were subsequently issued at Sinai (Exod. xix. 10), and were meant to symbolise a moral and spiritual purification of the mind and heart. **And let us arise, and go to Bethel.** "This is obviously not the first time Jacob acquainted his family with the vision at Bethel" (Inglis). **And I will make there an altar unto God,**—El is probably employed because of its proximity to and connection with Bethel, or house of El, and the intended contrast between the El of Bethel and the strange Elohim which Jacob's household were commanded to put away (cf. Quarry, p. 512)—**who answered me in the day of my distress,**—this seems to imply that Jacob prayed at Bethel before he slept, if it does not refer to his supplication before meeting, Esau (ch. xxxii. 9)—**and was with me in the way which I went.** This language clearly looks back to Bethel (*vide* ch. xxviii. 20).

Ver. 4.—**And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods**—Rosenmüller thinks these must have been many, since the historian would not otherwise have used the term כָּל—**which were in their hand** (*i. e.* which they possessed), **and all their earrings which were in their ears;**—*i. e.* those employed for purposes of idolatrous worship, which were often covered with allegorical figures and mysterious sentences, and supposed to be endowed with a talismanic virtue (Judges viii. 24; Isa. iii. 20; Hosea ii. 13)—**and Jacob hid them**—having probably first destroyed them, since they do not appear to have been ever after sought for or resumed by the parties who gave them up (Hughes)—**under the oak which was by Shechem.** Whether the oak, or terebinth, under which Abraham once pitched his tent (ch. xii. 6), that beneath whose shade Joshua afterwards erected his memorial pillar (Josh. xxiv. 26), the oak of the sorcerers (Judges ix. 37), and the oak of the pillar at Shechem (Judges ix. 6) were all the tree under which Jacob buried the images and earrings cannot with certainty be determined, though the probability is that they were.

Ver. 5.—**And they journeyed** (from Shechem, after the work of reformation just described): **and the terror of God**—meaning not simply a great terror, as in ch. xxiii. 6; xxx. 8 (Dathe, Bush), but either a supernatural dread inspired by Elohim (Ainsworth, Clericus, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, and others), or a fear of Elohim, under whose care Jacob manifestly had been taken (Murphy, Quarry)—**was upon the cities that were round about them,**—literally, *in their circuits*, i. e. wherever they went—**and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob**—as might have been expected.

Ver. 6.—**So** (literally, *and*) **Jacob came to Luz** (*vide* ch. xxviii. 19), **which is in the land of Canaan** (this clause is added to draw attention to the fact that Jacob had now accomplished his return to Canaan), **that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him**—*i. e.* his household and the captured Shechemites.

Ver. 7.—**And he built there an altar,**—thus redeeming his vow (cf. Eccles. v. 4)—**and called the place El-beth-el:**—*i. e.* God of Bethel. Not he called the place of God, or the place sacred to God, Bethel (Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 2174), nor he called the altar (Keil, Kalisch, Gerlach, &c.), but he called the place where the altar was El-beth-el; *i. e.* either he devoted the place as sacred to the El of Bethel (Rosenmüller), or he gave to the place the name of (*sc.* the place of) the El of Bethel, reading the first El as

a genitive (Lange); or he called it El-Beth-el metaphorically, as Jerusalem afterwards was styled Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer. xxxiii. 16) and Jehovah Shammah (Ezek. xlviii. 35; Inglis). It has been proposed, after the LXX., to avoid the seeming incongruity of assigning such a name to a place, to read, he invoked upon the place the El of Bethel (Quarry, p. 513)—**because there God appeared unto him,**—the El of Bethel was Jehovah (*vide* ch. xxviii. 13; xxxi. 13)—**when he fled from the face of his brother.**

Ver. 8.—**But Deborah**—Bee (Gesenius, Fürst) **Rebekah's nurse** (*vide* ch. xxiv. 59) **died**—at a very advanced age, having left Padan-aram for Canaan along with Rebekah, upwards of 150 years ago. That she is now found in Jacob's household may be accounted for by supposing that Rebekah had sent her, in accordance with the promise of ch. xxvii. 45 (Delitzsch); or that Jacob had paid a visit to his father at Hebron, and brought her back with him to Shechem, probably because of Rebekah's death (Lange); or that on Rebekah's death she had been transferred to Jacob's household (Keil, Murphy, Alford); or that Isaac, "who had during the twenty years of his son's absence wandered in different parts of the land" (?), had "at this period of his migrations come into the neighbourhood of Bethel" (Kalisch). **And she was buried beneath Bethel**—which was situated in the hill country, whence Jacob is instructed to "go up" to Bethel (ver. 1)—**under an oak.** More correctly, the oak or terebinth, *i. e.* the well-known tree, which long after served to mark her last resting-place, which some have without reason identified with the palm tree of Deborah the prophetess (Judges iv. 5), and the oak of Tabor mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 3 (Delitzsch, Kurtz, &c.). **And the name of it was called**—not "he," *i. e.* Jacob, "called it" (Ainsworth), but "one called its name," *i. e.* its name was called (Kalisch)—**Allon-bachuth** (*i. e.* the oak of weeping).

Vers. 9, 10.—**And God appeared unto Jacob again,**—this was a visible manifestation, in contrast to the audible one in Shechem (ver. 1), and in a state of wakefulness (ver. 13), as distinguished from the dream vision formerly beheld at Bethel (ch. xxviii. 12)—**when he came** (or had come) **out of Padan-aram** (as previously he had appeared to the patriarch on going into Padan-aram), **and blessed him**—*i. e.* renewed the promises of the covenant, of which he was the heir. **And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob:**—or Supplanter (*vide* ch. xxv. 26). Lange reads, Is thy name Jacob?—**thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel** (*vide* ch. xxxii. 28) **shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel** The renewal of the name given at Peniel may possibly indicate a revival in the spiritual life of Jacob, which had been declining in the interval between the former interview with God and the present (Murphy), but was probably designed as a confirmation of the former interview with God, and of the experience through which he then passed. Cf. the twice-given name of Peter (John i. 42; Matt. xvi. 16—19).

Vers. 11, 12.—**And God said unto him** (repeating substantially the promises made to Abraham), **I am God Almighty:**—El Shaddai (cf. ch. xvii. 1)—**be fruitful and multiply;**—"Abraham and Isaac had each only one son of promise; but now the time of increase was come" (Murphy; cf. ch. i. 28)—**a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee** (cf. ch. xvii. 5; xxviii. 3), **and kings shall come out of thy loins** (cf. ch. xvii. 6, 16); **and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac** (*vide* ch. xii. 7; xiii. 15; xxvi. 3, 4), **to thee I will give it** (cf. ch. xxviii. 13), **and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.** The time of their entering on possession was specified to Abraham (ch. xv. 16).

Ver. 13.—**And God went up from him**—showing this to have been a visible manifestation (cf. ch. xvii. 22)—**in the place where he talked with him.**

Ver. 14.—**And Jacob set up a pillar**—the former pillar (ch. xxviii. 18) having probably fallen down and disappeared—**in the place where he** (God) **talked with him** (to commemorate the interview), even **a pillar of stone.** The setting up of pillars, according to Tuch a peculiarity of the Elohist, appears to have been a favourite practice of Jacob's: witness the first pillar at Bethel (ch. xxviii. 18), the pillar on Galeed (ch. xxxi. 45), the second pillar at Bethel (ch. xxxv. 14), the pillar over Rachel's grave (ch. xxxv. 20). **And he poured a drink offering thereon.** This is the first mention of those sacrificial libations which afterwards became so prominent in connection with the Mosaic ritual (Exod. xxix. 40, 41; Levit. xxiii. 13, 18, 37; Numb. vi. 15; and elsewhere). Under the law the נֶסֶךְ—σπονδεῖον, σπονδή (LXX.) *libamentum*, *libamen* (Vulgate); **frankopfer** (Luther)—consisted of a fourth part of a hin of wine, which was equal to about a third of a gallon. **And he poured oil thereon**—as he did on the previous occasion (ch. xxviii. 18, *q. v.*).

Ver. 15.—**And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.** This name was first given after the dream vision of the ladder (ch. xxviii. 19); already on this occasion it had been changed into El-beth-el (ver. 7); now its old name is reimposed.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—15.—*Bethel revisited.* I. JACOB'S JOURNEY TO BETHEL. 1. The *occasion* of the journey. The crime of his sons had made it necessary that Jacob should leave Shechem and its neighbourhood; but it is doubtful if in the circumstances Jacob would have thought of going to Bethel without an express invitation from Heaven, which, however, he got. 2. The *object* of the journey. This was stated by the Divine communication which Jacob received to be the fulfilment of the vow which twenty years before he had made to erect an altar on the spot where he enjoyed the vision of the ladder and the angels. Vows do not lose their obligatory character by lapse of years. Men may, but God never does, forget the promises which are made to him. Hence the counsel of the Preacher (Eccles. v. 4, 5). 3. The *preparation* for the journey. The removal of the strange gods—(1) Was needful if God was to be sincerely worshipped by Jacob and his household. The necessity of having no other gods but Jehovah was afterwards enjoined upon Israel as a nation. In the gospel the law is equally imperative. God and Christ demand the undivided homage of the human heart. (2) Was counselled by Jacob to his household. It is well when heads of families have the ability as well as inclination to direct their children and dependents in the duties of religion. (3) Was cheerfully assented to by Jacob's household. The silver and wooden images (the teraphim) that Rachel had abstracted from her father's tent, the idolatrous objects that the Shechemites may have brought with them, and the earrings that were in their ears, were at once and completely given up, and by Jacob's own hand buried beneath the oak of Shechem. (4) Was symbolised in Jacob's household by the acts of washing and putting on of clean apparel. Under the law corporeal ablutions and beautified habiliments were typical of spiritual renovation and the putting on of the righteousness of the saints (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Heb. x. 22; Jude 23; Rev. xix. 2). 4. The *experience* of the journey. Wherever the travellers went they found themselves unmolested, and the cities round about them alarmed, and afraid to pursue. The terror of Elohim was upon the people of the land, and thus the care of Jehovah was around his saints. 5. The *completion* of the journey. Jacob and all the people that were with him came to Luz in the land of Canaan, which is Bethel. Many journeys are begun that never end. Some that promise well at the outset are overwhelmed in disaster before they terminate. It is only he who keeps Israel that can preserve a good man's going out and coming in.

II. JACOB'S RESIDENCE AT BETHEL. 1. *The building of an altar.* This was on the part of Jacob (1) an act of obedience, since it was done in accordance with Divine instructions (ver. 1); (2) an act of justice, inasmuch as it was executed in fulfilment of a vow (ch. xxviii. 22); (3) an act of gratitude, being designed to give expression to Jacob's thankfulness for God's mercies (vers. 3, 7). 2. *The death of Deborah.* (1) Her life-work: Rebekah's nurse. (2) Her death: this must have taken place at an advanced age. (3) Her burial: the place of sepulture was on the slope of Bethel hill, beneath the shadow of a wide-spreading oak. (4) Her memorial: the tree was named Allon-bachuth, oak of weeping. 3. *The appearance of Elohim.* (1) The blessing renewed (ver. 9;) (2) the new name confirmed (ver. 10); (3) the promises repeated (ver. 11). 4. *The erection of a pillar.* The old column having probably been thrown down, this was (1) set up as a memorial of the interview with God which had just been enjoyed; (2) employed as an altar for the worship of Elohim—"he poured a drink offering thereon;" and (3) consecrated as an object of reverential regard by pouring oil thereon. 5. *The renaming of the place.* The name given twenty years previously is renewed, Bethel (ver. 15), with a slight modification, El-Bethel (ver. 7), to connect it with the altar just erected.

Learn—1. That good men sometimes require to be reminded by God of their duty. 2. That acts of Divine worship should be preceded by heart purification and life reformation. 3. That God is perfectly able to protect his people when they are walking in his appointed paths. 4. That good men when serving God are not exempt from the afflictions of life. 5. That faithful servants should be tenderly cherished by their masters when old, decently buried when dead, and lovingly

remembered when entombed. 6. That God never forgets either his promises or his people. 7. That God should not be forgotten by those whom he remembers.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—15.—*God with us.* Jacob's settlement with his family at Bethel. This was a solemn renewal of the covenant to the patriarch at the end of his pilgrimage. It was the occasion for a new dedication of himself and his household by vows and offerings, and by separation of themselves from all heathen things and thoughts around the newly-erected altar *El-Bethel.*

I. Revelation the basis of faith. God went up from him after he had spoken with him, and there he set up a pillar of stone, and poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

II. Personal experience the background of a consecrated life. We should make the *memory of God's goodness* the foundation on which we build up the monuments of our life. Mark the places by offerings. Let the Bethel of our worship be the Bethel of his praise.—R.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Spiritual renovation.* Spiritual life is a thing of growth; never finished here (Phil. iii. 13; Heb. vi. 1). No doubt the all-important question is, Art thou in Christ? And in every Christian life there is a point, known to God, when the soul passes from death to life (1 John v. 12). For by nature children of wrath. Still there is a life's work. The spirit may have chosen Christ; but the flesh is weak, and the law of sin still works. Most commonly in such a life certain times will stand out, connected with special lessons and special dealings, when some window of the soul has been opened to heavenly light, some line of action pressed upon the mind.

I. The lesson learned by Jacob himself. We know not when his spiritual life began. Probably before he left home; for with all his faults he desired a spiritual blessing. But at Bethel and Penuel great steps were made. He learned the presence of God, and the protecting care of God, as he had never known them before. Yet the lessons were chiefly subjective; they regarded his own attitude towards God. And this generally comes first, but it is not all. "Arise, go up to Bethel." Take up again the lesson book. Is there not more to be learned from it? Those angels ascending and descending, were they charged with thy good only? The Lord who stood above, did he care only for thee? With all thy possessions thou art in "a solitary way" (Ps. cvii. 4). Here Jacob seems first to realise his responsibility for the spiritual state of others (cf. Ps. cxix. 136). The Christian character is not thoroughly formed till it is felt that the possession of truth binds us to use it for the good of others. Being "bought with a price," we are debtors to all (Rom. i. 14); and chiefly to those with whom we are connected (1 Tim. v. 8).

II. The work he took in hand. To press upon his household—1. Single-hearted service of God. "Put away the strange gods." Sincerity lies at the root of all real renovation. Hitherto the semi-idolatry of teraphim seems to have been tacitly allowed. Jacob's fondness for Rachel may have kept him from forbidding it. Hence a divided service (2 Kings xvii. 33; Mark vii. 7). Putting away does not refer only to formal worship. It is putting away service of the god of this world: covetousness (Col. iii. 5), worldly aims (John v. 44), gratification of self (Luke xii. 19; xiv. 11), traditional maxims of conduct and judgment (Mark iii. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 4). It is seeking first the kingdom of God, and resting in him (Ps. xxxvii. 5). 2. "Be clean." No toleration of evil (Matt. v. 48). Christians are to be a holy people (1 Pet. ii. 9). This is much more than a mere upright and honourable life. The Levitical rules, strict and minute as they were, faintly shadowed the extent of the law of righteousness. See the Sermon on the Mount. Vast difference between an upright life and a holy life. The one is a following of rules, the other a walk with God. 3. "Change your garments." Under the law this a necessary part of purification. Contrast the garments, Ps. cix. 18 and Isa. lxi. 10. The explanation, Zech. iii. 4. In New Testament language, "put on Christ." The root is atonement, the covering of sins (Ps. xxxii. 1), the forgiveness of the sinful (Rom. iii. 26). No

real renovation without this change—casting away self-righteousness, and clinging to the work of Christ (Jer. xxiii. 6; Rom. x. 4). Many have said trust in free grace points to sin. God's word from end to end declares it is the only way of holiness.—M.

Ver. 2.—*Jacob's preparation for acceptable worship.* "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be ye clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel." "When thou vowest a vow, defer not to pay it," says Ecclesiastes (ch. v. 4); but Jacob had deferred. He made a vow at Bethel, and he seems afterwards to have ignored it. If he thought of it, a number of things had been ever ready to present themselves as excuses for delay. His faithful services given constantly to Laban, his efforts to make good his position in the land, and then to avert the anger of Esau, had apparently absorbed so much of his attention that he had forgotten his vows. These solemn promises had been made at a very critical period of his life, and God had not forgotten them. He reminds Jacob of them in a very emphatic manner. Jacob had failed to see in the circumstances in which he was placed with respect to the people among whom he dwelt that there was a hint of neglected duty. God permitted Jacob to be made uncomfortable that he might be made considerate. The way in which his sons had treated the Shechemites had brought him into great danger. He and all his were likely to be cut off by these enraged inhabitants of the land. He is reminded of the danger in which he was once placed from the vengeance of Esau. The similarity of the circumstances forcibly and very naturally turn his thoughts to the One who alone can be his defence. Thus circumstances and Divine communications impel to the performance of duty. How merciful is God in his treatment of souls! how he leads the wanderer back to duty! Jacob, when about to strike his tents and remove to Bethel, wishes that his sons and servants should go up with him, and that they should go up in the right spirit. He therefore says to them, "Put away the strange gods," &c.

I. Neglected duty is a hindrance to appropriate and acceptable worship. That Jacob should have been obliged to give such an injunction to his household shows that he had not sufficiently kept before his sons and servants the duty they owed to God. He had allowed himself to strive for worldly success until they might have even imagined that he was no better than the rest of them or their neighbours; but deep down in the heart of this man was a reverence for God and a desire to do his will. His neglect to carefully instruct his sons had borne bitter fruit. Had he instilled into his sons ideas more in accordance with the character of the God he served, they would not have taken such mean methods as are mentioned of revenging themselves on those they had come to dislike. His neglect necessitates the sudden and difficult effort now put forth to induce his sons to seek with him to serve God. He feels that he cannot rightly worship God unless his children and household are with him in spirit. He wishes to foster in them a belief in his own sincerity. To have one in a family looking on indifferently or sneeringly is death to successful worship. Jacob's neglect had led to carelessness by his sons of the Divine service. He could not himself enter heartily on the service until he had discharged, in a measure, his duty as guide and instructor to his family.

II. Another hindrance is the attachment to objects wrongly held in reverence. The sons of Jacob had admitted false gods into their affections. Idolatry was rife among them. Even his wife Rachel had so much faith in her father's idols that she stole them when she left home. The sons caught the spirit of the mother, and indulged in the worship of strange gods. Perhaps they worshipped secretly the gods which Rachel cherished, or they may have given adoration to the idols they found among the spoils of the Shechemites. They may have had little images which they carried about with them, as many superstitious Christians carry the crucifix. Amulets and charms they seem to have worn on their hands and in their ears, all indicating superstition, false worship, and wrong ideas. God is spoken of in the Bible as "jealous." This is with respect to worship given to representations of gods having no existence. The jealousy is right, because it would be an evil thing for man himself to think there were many gods, or to select his own god. When, in after ages, the descendants of these sons of Jacob yielded to the sin of

worshipping other gods, ten of the tribes were swept away, and have never been rediscovered. Indeed the stream was tainted in source, and "grew no purer as it rolled along." When Achan brought the Babylonish garment into the camp of Israel, the chosen of God could not stand before their enemies, but when it was removed they were again victorious. So strange gods must be removed from our homes and from our hearts, or we can never be successful in the conflict against sin, or in the acceptability of the worship we offer. It is for each Christian to search his soul, and to see whether there is any desire, habit, or practice which in the least militates against the worship of God. Many who were incorporated with Jacob's household were Syrians, who brought their evil practices with them. When any enter God's Church they must leave behind them the practices of the world; nor possessions nor position must be the gods then worshipped. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

III. THE HARBOURING OF ANY SPECIAL SIN WILL BE A SURE HINDRANCE. The sons of Jacob had not only outward false objects of reverence, but inward evil propensities. They were treacherous, cruel, lustful, envious, murderous. See how they treated the Shechemites, and in after years their own brother Joseph. What scandalising, jealousy, and even opposition, are found in some homes! How hard it is to alienate sinful habits from the heart and the home! how hard to get the right tone for devout service in the home! Certain habits of temper, ridicule, sarcasm will chill and check all worship. Jacob urged his sons to be "clean,"—pure,—"to change their garments." They had need to do the latter, for they had been spotted with the blood of the men they had murdered. Jacob meant that they were to put on the garments kept for the worship of God. Rebekah had garments by her in which Esau as eldest son worshipped God, and which she put on Jacob. It is probable that it was the practice under the patriarchal dispensation to perform certain ceremonial ablutions prior to entering on the solemn worship. "Cleanliness is next to godliness." It leads to it. The need of purity in the worship of God is thus indicated by ablutions and change of garments. But how easily we may have the outward without the inward. We need cleansing in the holy fountain opened by Christ, and to be clothed by his righteousness.

IV. A great hindrance to successful worship is HAVING LOW IDEAS OF THE DIGNITY OF THE ACT, AND THE MAJESTY AND HOLINESS OF HIM WHOM WE WORSHIP. God must be made to appear great to us. He is "high and lifted up." He made not only these frames of ours, but this vast universe. He is worshipped by worlds of intelligent spirits, and has been worshipped from the depths of eternity. He is holy and full of majesty. Shall we be indifferent as to the duty or the mode of worship? What a marvel that we should be permitted to have fellowship with our Creator! If we have it, it must be in the way and place he appoints. For Jacob it was at Bethel, for the Jews at Jerusalem, for Christians at the cross. To Jacob and the Jews it was by annual sacrifices, to us it is by the offering of Christ "once for all."—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 16.—**And they journeyed**—not in opposition to the Divine commandment (ver. 1), which did not enjoin a permanent settlement at Bethel, but in accordance probably with his own desire, if not also Heaven's counsel, to proceed to Mamre to visit Isaac—**from Bethel** (southwards in the direction of Hebron); **and there was but a little way** (literally, *there was yet a space of land;* probably a few furlongs (Murphy), about four English miles (Gerlach). The Vulgate translates, "in the spring-time," and the LXX. render, ἐγένετο δὲ ἡνίκα ἤγγισεν εἰς χαβραθὰ, both of which are misunderstandings of the original —**to come to Ephrath**:—Fruitful; the ancient name of Bethlehem (*vide infra*, ver. 19)—**and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour**—literally, *she had hard labour in her parturition*, which was perhaps all the more severe that sixteen or seventeen years had elapsed since her first son, Joseph, was born.

Ver. 17.—**And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour** (literally, *in her labouring hard in her parturition*), **that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also**—literally, *for also this to thee a son;* meaning either that she would certainly have strength to bring forth another son, or, what is more probable, that the child was already born, and that it was a son.

Ver. 18.—**And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing,**—literally, *in the depart-*

ing of her soul; not into annihilation, but into another (a disembodied) state of existence (*vide* ch. xxv. 8)—**for she died** (a pathetic commentary on ch. xxx. 1), **that she called his name Ben-oni** ("son of my sorrow," as a memorial of her anguish in bearing him, and of her death because of him): **but his father called him Benjamin**—"son of my right hand;" either "the son of my strength" (Clericus, Rosenmüller, Murphy), or "the son of my happiness or good fortune" (Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch), with allusion to Jacob's now possessing twelve sons; or as expressive of Jacob's unwillingness to see a bad omen in the birth of Rachel's child (Candlish); or "the son of my days," *i. e.* of my old age (Samaritan), an interpretation which Lange passes with a mere allusion, but which Kalisch justly pronounces not so absurd as is often asserted (cf. ch. xliv. 20); or "the son of my affection" (Ainsworth; cf. ch. lxxx. 18).

Ver. 19.—**And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem**—or House of Bread, about seven miles south of Jerusalem. It afterwards became the birthplace of David (1 Sam. xvi. 18) and of Christ (Matt. ii. 1). The assertion that this clause is a later interpolation (Lange) is unfounded (Kalisch, Kurtz).

Ver. 20.—**And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave** (*vide* on ver. 14): **that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day**—*i. e.* unto the times of Moses; but the site of Rachel's sepulchre was known so late as the age of Samuel (1 Sam. x. 2); and there seems no reason to question the tradition which from the fourth century has placed it within the Turkish chapel Kubbet Rachil, about half-an-hour's journey north of Bethlehem (Robinson, vol. i. p. 322; Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 404; Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 644; Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 149).

Ver. 21.—**And Israel** (or Jacob) **journeyed** (from Ephrath, after the funeral of Rachel), **and spread**—*i. e.* unfolded (ch. xii. 8; xxvi. 25)—**his tent beyond the tower of Edar**—literally, *to,* i. e. not *trans* (Vulgate), ultra (Dathe), but *ad,* usque (Rosenmüller), as far as Migdol Edar, the Tower of the Flock—probably a turret, or watch-tower, erected for the convenience of shepherds in guarding their flocks (2 Kings xviii. 8; 2 Chron. xxvi. 10; xxvii. 4),—the site of which is uncertain, but which is commonly supposed to have been a mile (Jerome) or more south of Bethlehem. The LXX. omit this verse.

Ver. 22.—**And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine**:—an act of incest (Levit. xviii. 8) for which he was afterwards disinherited (ch. xlix. 4; 1 Chron. v. 1)—**and Israel heard it.** The hiatus in the text and the break in the MS. at this point may both have been designed to express Jacob's grief at the tidings. The LXX. add feebly *καὶ πονηρὸν ἐφάνη ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ,* which surely fails to represent the mingled shame and sorrow, indignation and horror, with which his eldest son's wickedness must have filled him. **Now the sons of Jacob were twelve**—a separate verse in the LXX., which is certainly more in accordance with the sense than the division in the text.

Vers. 23—26.—**The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun** (cf. ch. xxix. 32—35; xxx. 18—20; xlvi. 8—15; Exod. i. 2, 3). **The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin** (cf. ch. xxx. 22—24; xxxv. 18; xlvi. 19). **And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali** (cf. ch. xxx. 4—8). **And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher** (cf. ch. xxx. 9—13): **these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram.** All except Benjamin were born there. Either this is an instance of the summary style of Scripture in which minute verbal accuracy is not always preserved (Inglis), or the whole period of Jacob's pilgrimage to Mesopotamia and back is intended by his residence in Padan-aram (Kalisch).

Ver. 27.—**And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre** (on the probability of Jacob's having previously visited his father, *vide* ver. 8), **unto the city of Arbah** (ch. xiii. 18; xxiii. 2, 19; Josh. xiv. 15; xv. 13), **which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.**

Ver. 28.—**And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.** At this time Jacob was 120; but at 130 he stood before Pharaoh in Egypt, at which date Joseph had been 10 years governor. He was therefore 120 when Joseph was promoted at the age of 30, and 107 when Joseph was sold; consequently Isaac was 167 years of age when Joseph was sold, so that he must have survived that event and sympathised with Jacob his son for a period of 13 years.

Ver. 29.—**And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people,**—cf. the account of Abraham's death (ch. xxv. 8)—being **old and full of days** (literally, *satisfied with days.* In ch. xxv. 8 the shorter expression *satisfied* is used): **and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him**—Esau arriving from Mount Seir to pay the last service due to his deceased parent, and Jacob according to him that precedence which had once belonged to him as Isaac's firstborn.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 16—29.—*From Bethel to Mamre.* I. THE DEATH OF RACHEL. 1. *The travailing woman.* Rachel, overtaken by the pains of childbirth, had hard labour. In every instance an inheritance derived from mother Eve (ch. iii. 16), the sorrow of maternity was in her case providentially intensified; perhaps by her advanced age, or by the discomforts of travel, or by feebleness of health, or possibly by special appointment of God as a rebuke for her inordinate desire for children (ch. xxx. 1), or as a means of shortening her life. 2. *The comforting midwife.* Though her name is not recorded, wherever this pathetic story is recited, there shall her kindly offices to the dying Rachel be remembered. Chosen to assist Rachel in her bodily struggle, she was likewise helpful to Rachel in her soul's conflict. Sympathising with the sufferer in her pain, she sought to minister comfort to the drooping heart in its despondency. They who tend the sick and dying should be tender in their feelings and hopeful in their words, as well as skilful and gentle in their acts. 3. *The departing mother.* Though Rachel's child was born, Rachel herself died; in which were some circumstances of sadness, as (1) that it happened on a journey,—"in the way to Ephrath,"—and near its end—"there was but a little way to come to Ephrath," where it is likely Jacob had intended to rest a while for Rachel's convenience; (2) that it occurred on the occasion of her confinement, death in child-bed being a comparatively rare experience in the history of mothers, though, considering the severity of the ordeal, it is a special mercy that any mothers survive; and (3) that it removed her from her newly-born son, than which no greater grief can agitate a dying mother's heart, and the thought of which perhaps gave added poignancy to the bitter anguish with which she named her child Ben-oni—the son of my sorrow. Yet in Rachel's death were certain elements of gladness, as (1) that she died in the presence of her husband, Jacob being by her couch to catch her latest breath; (2) that she died not before she gave him another son, to be to him whom she loved a Benjamin, though to herself Ben-oni; and (3) that she died in the hope of a glorious immortality, her soul departing to the better country, even an heavenly. 4. *The bereaved husband.* (1) Cheering the drooping heart of his dying wife. This is probably the correct view to be taken of what otherwise interpreted cannot fail to seem strangely inconsistent—Jacob's naming Rachel's child Benjamin, the son of my right hand, the son of my affection, of my prosperity, a token of good hope and happy fortune, while Rachel called him Ben-oni. "In vain the broken-hearted father—refusing to take in the terrible fact passing under his eye—determined to be sanguine to the last, and let no evil omen touch either mother or child—whispers hope in the dull ear of death, and welcomes the last pledge of an undying love as no "son of sorrow," but "the son of the right hand" (Candlish). (2) Burying the lifeless body of his beloved spouse, which doubtless he would do with reverent affection and with heart-felt mourning. (3) Erecting a pillar above her lonely grave—to demonstrate his affection for her who slept beneath, to show that though she lay not in the family tomb, she was not forgotten, and to mark the last resting-place of an ancestress of Israel.

II. THE SIN OF REUBEN. 1. *The enormity of Reuben's wickedness.* The act which he committed was that of incest, since Bilhah had been the wife of Jacob. It was a sin punishable by death under Moses' law (Levit. xviii. 8), and such a sin as should not be named among Christians (1 Cor. v. 1). It is not likely that Bilhah was innocent in this matter, but it is certain that Reuben was guilty of heinous transgression. 2. *The impression it produced on Jacob.* "Israel heard." We may supply the hiatus by saying, (1) with inexpressible grief—grief that a son and wife of his should have committed such a horrible iniquity; (2) with bitter shame—was this to be the end of all God's mercies to his house, and of all his efforts to piously direct his household? (3) with silent submission, as recognising God's hand in the dispensation. More bitter and crushing was this last stroke than the death of Rachel or even the ravishment of Dinah; and Jacob's silence under it may be interpreted as the silence of devout resignation:—"I was dumb, because thou didst it."

III. THE DEATH OF ISAAC. 1. *He was spared to see his son's return.* "Jacob

came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre" at least a considerable period before his death. According to calculations (*vide* Exposition), Isaac survived the sale of Joseph thirteen years. Hence Jacob's coming home must have taken place while Isaac had yet many years to live. It is a mercy which God does not grant to all, to see their children and their children's children around them before they die. 2. *He was privileged to reach a good old age.* "The days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years." Piety has a special tendency to prolong life (Ps. xxxiv. 12), while the wicked live not half their days (Ps. lv. 23). 3. *He was favoured with a peaceful and a blessed end.* "Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people." See Homily on the death of Abraham (ch. xxv. 8). 4. *He was honoured with a decent and respectful funeral.* "Esau and Jacob buried him." They laid him beside his ancestral dust in the family burying-place of Machpelah, where already slept the lifeless bodies of Abraham and Sarah, awaiting the resurrection, while his spirit went to company with theirs in the better country, even an heavenly.

Learn — 1. That bereavements, like the rest of life's afflictions, are of God's ordering, both as to time, place, and manner. 2. That in human families they who are most beloved are frequently removed first. 3. That the sick and dying should be ministered to with sympathy and tender attention. 4. That good men should love their wives when living, and remember them when dead. 5. That faith should always try to see the bright light of blessing in the cloud of earth's afflictions. 6. That worse calamities may overtake a saint than bereavements. 7. That pious children do not cast off their parents in old age.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 16—29. These *family records* mingle well with the story of God's grace. The mother's "*Benoni*" is the father's "*Benjamin*." Out of the pain and the bereavement sometimes comes the consolation. A strange blending of joy and sorrow is the tale of human love. But there is a higher love which may draw out the pure stream of peace and calm delight from that impure fountain. Jacob and Esau were separated in their lives, but they met at their father's grave. Death is a terrible divider, but a uniter too. Under the shadow of the great mystery, on the borders of an eternal world, in the presence of those tears which human eyes weep for the dead, even when they can weep no other tears, the evil things of envy, hatred, revenge, alienation do often hide themselves, and the better things of love, peace, brotherhood, amity come forth. Jacob was with Isaac when he died, and Esau came to the grave.—R.

§ 10. The Generations of Esau (ch. xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 1).

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Ver. 1.—**Now these are the generations** (cf. ch. ii. 4; v. 1, &c.) **of Esau,**—Hairy (*vide* ch. xxv. 25)—**which is Edom**—Red (*vide* ch. xxv. 30).

Vers. 2, 3.—**Esau took his wives** (the expression refers in this place not to the marriage, but to the removal, of his wives) **of the daughters of Canaan**;—*i. e.* who were of the daughters of Canaan (*vide* ch. xxvi. 34)—**Adah**—"Ornament," "Beauty" (Gesenius); the name also of one of Lamech's wives (cf. ch. iv. 19)—**the daughter of Elon**—"Oak" (Gesenius)—**the Hittite, and Aholibamah**—"Tent of the High Place" (Gesenius)—**the daughter of Anah**—"Answering" (Gesenius)—**the daughter**—*i. e.* the grand-daughter, though, after the LXX. and the Samaritan, some read the son, as in ver. 24 (Gesenius, Kalisch, Fürst, *et alii*)—**of Zibeon**—"Coloured" (Gesenius); "Wild," "Robber" (Fürst)—**the Hivite; and Bashemath**—"Sweet-smelling" (Gesenius)—**Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth**—"High Place" (Gesenius). The difference between this account and that previously given (ch. xxvi. 34; xxviii. 9) will appear at a glance by setting the two lists of wives in parallel columns:—

1. Judith, daughter of Beeri the Hittite.	1. Aholibamah, daughter of Anah, daughter of Zibeon the Hivite.

2. Bashemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite.	2. Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite.
3. Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael, sister of Nebajoth.	3. Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

The two lists agree in saying (1) that Esau had three wives, (2) that one of them was the daughter of Elon the Hittite, (3) that another of them was Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebajoth, and (4) that the name of one of them was Bashemath. The discrepancy between the two is greatest in respect of the first wife, who appears with a different name and a different parentage in the two lists; while with reference to the second and the third wives, it is only the difference of name that requires to be accounted for. Now since the two lists belong to the so-called Elohistic document (Tuch, Bleek, Stähelin, Davidson, *et alii*), the hypothesis must be discarded "that the Hebrew text, though containing several important coincidences, evidently embodies two accounts irreconcilably different" (Kalisch)—a conclusion which can only be maintained by ascribing to the author the most absolute literary incompetence. Equally the conjecture must be set aside that the two lists refer to different persons, the second three being names of wives which Esau took on the decease of the first. The solutions that appear most entitled to acceptance, though all are more or less conjectural, proceed upon the supposition that Esau had only three wives, or at most four. 1. On the hypothesis that Esau had not more than three wives, it is only needful to presume that each of them had two names, a not unusual circumstance in Oriental countries (Rosenmüller, Hävernick)—one of them, probably that contained in the present list, bestowed on the occasion of marriage; and that Anah, the father of Aholibamah, was the same person with Beeri, or the Well-Man, who received that cognomen from the incident related in ver. 24, viz., that he discovered certain hot springs while feeding his father's asses (Hengstenberg, Keil, Kurtz)—the peculiarity that in one place (ch. xxvi. 34) he is styled a Hittite, in another (ch. xxxvi. 2) a Hivite, and in a third (ch. xxxvi. 20) a Horite, being explained by the conjecture that the first was the generic term for the race, the second the specific designation of the tribe, and the third the particular name for the inhabitants of the district to which he belonged (Keil, Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary'). 2. Another solution gives to Esau four wives, by supposing Judith to have died without issue (Murphy, Jacobus), or, in consequence of being childless, though still living, to have been passed over in silence in the former genealogical register (Quarry), and Aholibamah to have been the fourth partner whom Esau espoused. The Samaritan version reads Mahalath for Bashemath in the second list, which it regards as an error of transcription (W. L. Alexander in Kitto's 'Cyclopedia'); while others think that Adah has been written by inadvertence for Bashemath (Inglis); but such conjectures are as unnecessary as they are manifestly arbitrary.

Vers. 4, 5.—**And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz**;—"The Strength of God" (Gesenius); afterwards the name of one of Job's friends (Job ii. 11; iv. 1; xv. 1)—**and Bashemath bare Reuel**;—"The Friend of God" (Gesenius); the name of Moses' father-in-law (Exod. ii. 18)—**and Aholibamah bare Jeush**,—"Collector" (Fürst, Lange); "whom God hastens" (Gesenius); afterwards the name of a son of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 19)—**and Jaalam**,—"whom God hides" (Gesenius); "Ascender of the Mountains" (Fürst)—**and Korah**:—"Baldness" (Fürst, Gesenius); the name of a family of Levites and singers in the time of David to whom ten of the psalms are ascribed—**these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan**—not necessarily implying that other sons were born to him in Edom, but rather intimating that all his family were born before he left the Holy Land.

Ver. 6.—**And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons** (literally, *souls*) **of his house, and his cattle** (*mikneh*), **and all his beasts** (*behemah*), **and all his substance** (literally, *all his acquisitions*), **which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country**—literally, *into a land*; not ἐκ τῆς γῆς (LXX.), or *in alteram regionem* (Vulgate), but either into the land, *sc.* of Seir (Keil), or, taking the next as a qualifying clause, into a land apart (Murphy, Lange)—**from the face of**—or, on account of (Rosenmüller, Kalisch)—**his brother Jacob.**

Ver. 7.—**For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers**—literally, *of their wanderings* (cf. ch. xxviii. 4; xxxvii. 1)—**could not bear them because of their cattle.** This does not necessarily imply that Jacob was established in Canaan before Esau removed. Esau may have recognised the impossibility of two so rich and powerful chieftains as himself and his brother occupying Canaan, and may have retired before Jacob actually took possession (Keil, Inglis).

Ver. 8.—**Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir** (ch. xxxii. 3; Deut. ii. 5; Josh. xxiv. 4): **Esau is Edom** (*vide* ch. xxv. 30). The obvious continuation of this verse is to be found in ch. xxxvii. 1, so that vers. 9—40 are parenthetical in their character; but whether originally written by Moses, or

inserted by a late redactor, as some maintain, may legitimately be regarded as an open question.

Ver. 9.—**And these are the generations of Esau**—"the repetition of this clause shows that it does not necessarily indicate diversity of authorship, or a very distinct piece of composition" (Murphy)—**the father of the Edomites** (*i. e.* the founder of the Edomitish nation) **in mount Seir.**

Vers. 10—12.—**These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau** (*vide* ver. 4). **And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman,**—the name was afterwards given to a district of Idumea (Jer. xlix. 20), and borne by one of Job's friends (Job ii. 11)—**Omar,**—"Eloquent" (Gesenius), "Mountain-dweller" (Fürst)—**Zepho,**—"Watch-tower" (Gesenius); called Zephi in 1 Chron. i. 36—**and Gatam,**—"their touch" (Gesenius), "dried up" (Fürst)—**and Kenaz**—"Hunting" (Gesenius). **And Timna**—"Restraint" (Gesenius, Fürst, Murphy)—**was concubine**—*pilgash* (vide ch. xvi. 3; xxv. 6)—**to Eliphaz Esau's son;**—perhaps given to him by Adah, so that her children were reckoned Adah's (Hughes)—**and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek**—"Inhabitant of the Valley," or "Warrior" (Fürst); "a nation of head-breakers" (Lange); "Labouring" (Gesenius, Murphy). It is probable that this was the founder of the Amalekite nation who attacked Israel at Horeb (Keil, Kalisch, Murphy), though by others (Gesenius, Michaelis, Fürst) these have been regarded as a primitive people, chiefly on the grounds that Amalek is mentioned in ch. xiv. 7 as having existed in the days of Abraham, and that Balaam calls Amalek the first of nations (Numb. xxiv. 20); but the first may simply be a prolepsis (Hengstenberg), while the second alludes not to the antiquity of the nation, but either to its power (Kalisch), or to the circumstance that it was the first heathen tribe to attack Israel (Keil). **These** (including Eliphaz for the reason specified above) were **the sons of Adah Esau's wife.**

Ver. 13.—**And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath,**—Nachath, "Going down"—**and Zerah,**—or Zerach, "Rising"—**Shammah,**—"Wasting" (Gesenius, Murphy); "Fame," "Renown" (Fürst)—**and Mizzah**:—"Trepidation" (Gesenius); "Fear," "Sprinkling" (Murphy); if from *mazaz*, "Fear," if from *nazah*, "Joy" (Fürst)—**these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.**

Ver. 14.—**And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife** (*vide* ver. 2): **and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah** (*vide* ver. 5).

Vers. 15, 16.—**These** were **dukes of the sons of Esau.** The אַלּוּפִים, derived probably from אָלַף, to be familiar, whence to join together, or associate, were Edomite and Horite phylarchs or tribe-leaders, ἡγεμόνες. (LXX.), chieftains of a thousand men (Gerlach). At a later period the term came to be applied to the Jewish chiefs or governors of the Restoration (Zech. ix. 7; xii. 5). **The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz** (*vide* on ver. 11), **duke Korah,**—inserted here probably by clerical error from ver. 18 (Kennicott, Tuch, Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Murphy, Quarry), and accordingly omitted in the Samaritan Pentateuch and Version, though still retained by Onkelos and the LXX., and on the hypothesis of its genuineness explained by some as the name of a nephew of Eliphaz (Junius); of a son by another mother (Ainsworth); of a son of Korah (ver. 18) by the widow of Timna (1 Chron. i. 36), who, having died without issue, left his wife to his brother (Michaelis); of some descendant of Eliphaz by intermarriage who subsequently rose to be the head of a clan (Kalisch),—**duke Gatam** (*vide* ver. 11), and **duke Amalek** (*vide* ver. 12): **these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these** were **the sons of Adah.**

Ver. 17.—**And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these are the dukes that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife** (*vide* on ver. 13).

Ver. 18.—**And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.** In the two previous instances it is the grandsons of Esau that become the alluphim or heads of tribes, while in this it is the sons, which Hävernick regards as a mark of authenticity (*vide* 'Introd.,' § 20).

Ver. 19.—**These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their dukes.**

Vers. 20, 21.—**These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land.** The primitive inhabitants of Idumea were Horites (*vide* ch. xiv. 6), of whom the ancestor, Seir ("Rugged"), either gave his name to, or took his name from, the district in which he lived. Though ultimately driven out by the Edomites (Deut. ii. 12), they were probably only gradually dispossessed, and not until a portion of them had coalesced with their conquerors, as Esau himself had a Horite wife, Aholibamah, and his son Eliphaz a Horite concubine of the name of Timna. They were, as the name Horite, from *chor*, a hole or cavern, imports a race of troglodytes

or cave men, who dwelt in the sandstone and limestone caves with which the land of Edom abounds. The cave palaces, temples, and tombs that have been excavated in Mount Seir are still astonishing in their grandeur. **Lotan,**—"Wrapping up" (Gesenius)—**and Shobal,** — "Flowing" (Gesenius) — **and Zibeon, and Anah** (this Anah was the uncle of the Anah mentioned in ver. 25), **and Dishon,**—"Gazelle" (Gesenius, Fürst)—**and Ezer,**—"Treasure" (Gesenius)—**and Dishan**:— same as Dishon (Gesenius, Fürst); "Threshing" (Murphy)—**these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.**

Ver. 22.—**And the children of Lotan were Hori**—the name of the tribe (ver. 20)—**and Hemam**:—or Homam (1 Chron. i. 39); "Destruction" (Gesenius), "Commotion" (Fürst, Murphy)—**and Lotan's sister was Timna**—probably the concubine of Eliphaz (ver. 12).

Ver. 23.—**And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan,**—or Alian (1 Chron. i. 40); "Unjust" (Gesenius), "Lofty" (Fürst, Murphy)—**and Manahath,**—"Rest" (Gesenius)—**and Ebal,**—"Stripped of leaves" (Gesenius, Murphy); "Bare Mountain" (Fürst)—**Shepho,**—or Shephi (1 Chron. i. 40); "Nakedness" (Gesenius)—**and Onam**—"Strong" (Gesenius).

Ver. 24.—**And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah,**—"Screamer" (Gesenius)—**and Anah**:—the father-in-law of Esau (ver. 2)—**this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness,**—neither invented the procreation of mules (Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Luther, Calvin, Willet, Clarke, Ainsworth, &c.), since מָצָא does not signify to invent, but to light upon or discover (Keil), and there were no horses at that time in those regions (Michaelis), and it is not said that Anah was feeding his father's horses and asses, but only asses (Rosenmüller); nor overcame the giants (Onkelos, Samaritan, Bochart), which would have required אֵימִים (ch. xiv. 5; Deut. ii. 11); nor found out salt water (Oleaster, Pererius), a useful herb (Mais), or 'Ιαμεὶν as a proper name (LXX.); but discovered the warm springs, the ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, יֵמִם, being now generally taken to mean *aquæ calidæ* (Vulgate, Dathius, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy), of which there were various in the vicinity, as, *e. g.*, the springs of Callirrhoe in the Wady Zerka Maein, and those in the Wady-el-Ahsa to the south-east of the Dead Sea, and those in the Wady Hamad between Kerek and the Dead Sea—**as he fed** (literally, *in his feeding*) **the asses of Zibeon his father.** "The whirlpool of Karlsbad is said to have been discovered through a hound of Charles IV. which pursued a stag into a hot spring, and attracted the huntsmen to the spot by its howling" (Keil *in loco*; cf. Tacitus, 'Hist.,' v. 3).

Ver. 25.—**And the children of Anah**—the brother of Zibeon (ver. 20)—were **these; Dishon,**—named after his uncle (ver. 21)—**and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.** This Aholibamah was not Esau's wife, but the cousin of Esau's wife's father.

Ver. 26.—**And these are the children of Dishon**;—the son of Seir (ver 21)—**Hemdan,**—or Amram (1 Chron. i. 41); "Pleasant" (Gesenius)—**and Eshban,** — or Heshbon; "Reason," "Understanding" (Gesenius); "Intelligent," "Hero" (Fürst)—**and Ithran,**—the same as Jethro and Jithron; "the Superior or Excellent One" (Gesenius, Fürst, Murphy, Lange)—**and Cheran**—"Harp" (Gesenius), "Companion" (Fürst).

Ver. 27.—**The children of Ezer** are **these; Bilhan,**—"Modest" (Gesenius), "Tender" (Fürst)—**and Zaavan,**—"Disturbed" (Gesenius)—**and Akan**—Jakan (1 Chron. i. 42); "Twisting" (Gesenius, Murphy).

Ver. 28.—**The children of Dishan are these; Uz,**—"Sandy" (Gesenius, Fürst)—**and Aran** — "Wild Goat" (Gesenius); "Power," "Strength" (Fürst).

Vers. 29, 30.—**These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hori, among** (rather, according to) **their dukes in the land of Seir.**

Ver. 31.—**And these** (which follow) **are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any** (literally, *before the reigning of a*) **king over** (or, to) **the children of Israel.** 1. The reference to Israelitish kings in this place has been explained as an evidence of post-Mosaic authorship (Le Clerc, Bleek, Ewald, Bohlen, *et alii*), or at least as a later interpolation from 1 Chron. i. 43 (Kennicott, A. Clarke, Lange), but is sufficiently accounted for by remembering that in ch. xxxv. 11 kings had been promised to Jacob, while the blessing pronounced on Esau (ch. xxvii. 40) implied that in his line also should arise governors, the historian being understood to say that though the promised kings had not yet arisen in the line of Jacob, the house of Esau had attained at a somewhat early period to political importance (Calvin, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Gerlach, Hävernick, and others). 2. The difficulty of finding room for the dukes (seven, four and three, all grandsons of Esau, vers. 15—19), the kings (eight in number, vers. 32—39), and again the dukes (in all eleven, vers. 40—43), that intervened between Esau and Moses disappears if the kings and dukes existed contemporaneously, of which Exod. xv.

15, as compared with Numb. xx. 14, affords probable evidence. 3. As to the character of the Edomitish kings, it is apparent that it was not a hereditary monarchy, since in no case does the son succeed the father, but an elective sovereignty, the kings being chosen by the dukes, alluphim, or phylarchs (Keil, Hengstenberg, Kalisch, Gerlach), though the idea of successive usurpations (Lange) is not without a measure of probability.

Ver. 32.—**And Bela the son of Beor** (cf. ch. xiv. 2, where Bela is the name for Zoar; and Numb. xxii. 5, where Balaam's father is called Beor, whence the LXX. has here Βαλάκ) **reigned in Edom** (as the first sovereign): **and the name of his city was Dinhabah**—"Concealment," or "Little Place" (Fürst); a place of plunder (Gesenius), the situation of which has not been identified.

Ver. 33.—**And Bela died, and Jobab**—probably meaning "Desert," or "Shout" (Gesenius); identified with Job (LXX., Augustine, Ambrose)—an opinion which Michaelis declares to be *insignis error, nec historicus solum, sed et grammaticus*, Jobab being derived from the root יָבַב (*vide* 'Suppl.,' p. 40); the name of a region of the Joktanite Arabs (ch. x. 29)—**the son of Zerah** (who may have been the duke Zerah mentioned in ver. 17, and is here described by the territory over which he ruled as) **of Bozrah**—"Fort" (Gesenius); afterwards an important city of the Edomites (Isa. xxxiv. 6; lxiii. 1; Jer. xlix. 13); still to be traced in El-Busaireh, a village and castle in Arabia Petræa, about twenty-five miles south by east of the Dead Sea (Robinson, vol. ii. pp. 570, 571; Gesenius, 'Lex.,' p. 135: Porter in Kitto's 'Cyclopedia')—**reigned in his stead**—literally, *under him*, i. e. in succession to him.

Ver. 34.—**And Jobab died, and Husham**—Hushai; "Haste" (Gesenius)—**of the land of Temani** (a province in Northern Idumea, with a city Teman which has not yet been discovered) **reigned in his stead.**

Ver. 35.—**And Husham died, and Hadad**—"Shouting," *e. g.* for joy (Gesenius); whence "Conqueror" (Fürst)—**the son of Bedad,**—"Separation" (Gesenius)—**who smote Midian** (*vide* ch. xxv. 2) **in the field of Moab** (*vide* ch. xix. 37), **reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith**—"Ruins" (Gesenius), "Twisting" (Murphy), "Hut-Village" (Fürst). An attempt has been made (Bohlen) to identify this monarch with the Edomite of the same name who rose against Solomon (1 Kings xi. 14); but (1) this Hadad was not of royal blood, while Solomon's contemporary was; (2) this Hadad was a king, while Solomon's adversary was only a pretender; (3) this Hadad was a conqueror of the Midianites, while in Solomon's time the Midianites had vanished from history; and (4) this Hadad lived and reigned before Israel had any kings (*vide* Hengstenberg, 'On the Genuineness of the Pentateuch,' vol. ii. dissert. 6; and cf. Hävernick's 'Introd.,' § 20, and Keil *in loco*).

Ver. 36.—**And Hadad died, and Samlah**—"Covering," "Garment," (Gesenius, Fürst, Murphy)—**of Masrekah**—"Vineyard" (Gesenius)—**reigned in his stead.**

Ver. 37.—**And Samlah died, and Saul**—"Asked" (Gesenius)—**of Rehoboth by the river**—Rehoboth (literally, *wide spaces*) of the River is so called to distinguish it from the Asshurite settlement of the same name in ch. x. 11 (Rosenmüller), though by some it is identified with Rehoboth Ir (Ainsworth). If the river spoken of be the Euphrates (Onkelos, Keil, Kalisch), then it is probably to be sought for in the Errachabi or Rachabeh near the mouth of the Chaboras (Keil), though the river may be some small *nahar* in Idumea (Lange), in which case the site will be uncertain—**reigned in his stead.**

Ver. 38.—**And Saul died, and Baal-hanan**—"Lord of Benignity" (Gesenius)—**the son of Achbor**—"Mouse" (Gesenius)—**reigned in his stead.**

Ver. 39.—**And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar**—Hadad (1 Chron. i. 50)—**reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau**;—Pai (1 Chron. i. 50); "Bleating" (Gesenius), "Yawning" (Fürst), with which accords Φογώρ (LXX.)—**and his wife's name was Mehetabel,**—"Whom God benefits" (Gesenius)—**the daughter of Matred,**—"Pushing" (Gesenius)—**the daughter of Mezahab**—"Water of Gold" (Gesenius). That the death of this king, which a later chronicler records (1 Chron. i. 51), is not here mentioned by the historian is commonly regarded (Rosenmüller, Hävernick, Hengstenberg, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*) as a proof that he was then alive, and that in fact he was the king of Edom to whom Moses sent ambassadors requesting permission to pass through the land (Numb. xx. 14).

Vers. 40—43.—**And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names.** It is now generally agreed that this and the ensuing verses contain not a second list of dukes who rose to power on the overthrow of the preceding monarchical institutions (Bertheau, Ainsworth, Patrick), or a continuation of the preceding list of dukes, which had simply been interrupted by a parenthesis about the kings (Bush); but either an enumeration of the hereditary phylarchs who were contemporaneous with Hadar, and in all probability formed his council (Murphy), or a territorial catalogue of the districts in which the original alluphim who sprang from Esau (vers. 15—19) exercised their sovereignty

(Keil, Kalisch, Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **Duke Timnah,**—according to the explanation just given this should perhaps be read duke of Timnah = Amalek, whose mother was Timna (Lange), but this is conjectural—**duke Alvah,**—or of Alvah, or Aliah, closely allied to Alvan (ver. 23)—**duke** (of) **Jetheth,**—"Nail" (Gesenius), "Subjugation" (Fürst)—**duke** (of) **Aholibamah,**—*vide* ver. 2; perhaps Esau's wife as well as Eliphaz's concubine gave her name to the district over which her son ruled—**duke Elah,**—"Strength" (Fürst), "Terebinth" (Murphy)—**duke Pinon,**—probably equal to Pimon, dark (Gesenius)—**duke Kenaz** (*vide* ver. 11), **duke Teman** (ver. 15), **duke Mibzar,**—"Fortress," "Strong City" (Gesenius)—**duke Magdiel,** —"Prince of God" (Gesenius)—**duke Iram**:—"Citizen" (Gesenius)—**these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations** (*i. e.* their capitals, or districts) **in the land of their possessions.** The word seems to indicate an independent sovereignty within their respective provinces or principalities. **He is Esau the father of the Edomites.** The clause is equivalent to saying, This Esau (already referred to) was the ancestor of these Edomites.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Ver. 1.—**And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger** (literally, *in the land of the sojournings of his father*), **in the land of Canaan.** This verse is not the commencement of the ensuing (Keil, Kalisch, Lange, &c.), but the concluding sentence of the present, section, the adversative particle ו, corresponding to the δὲ of the LXX., introducing a contrast between Esau, who dwelt in Mount Seir, and Jacob, who dwelt in the land of Canaan, and the following verse beginning the next division of the book with the customary formula, "These are the generations" (LXX., some MS., Quarry, p. 523). Rosenmüller less happily connects the present verse with ch. xxxv. 29; the Vulgate begins the next section with ver. 3. A similar division of verses to that proposed will be found in ch. xxv. 11.

HOMILETICS.

Ch. xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 1.—*The last of the house of Esau.* I. THE REMOVAL OF ESAU'S HOUSE FROM CANAAN. 1. A *complete* removal. "Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into a land apart from the face of his brother." 2. A *necessary* removal. Two things rendered the withdrawal of Esau from Canaan imperative—(1) that which was patent to Esau's sense, viz., that the land of Canaan was too strait to afford accommodation to two so powerful chieftains as his brother and himself; and (2) that which appears to have been accepted by Esau's faith, viz., that the decision of Divine providence was against him, and that the land belonged to Jacob. Hence for this twofold reason his retirement from Canaan is said to have taken place on account of his brother. 3. A *peaceful* removal. Though in one sense compulsory, in another aspect of it Esau's departure was voluntary. Instead of disputing possession of the land with his brother, which, humanly speaking, he might have done with some considerable hope of success, he quietly ceded what perhaps he saw he could not ultimately retain. Still it was to his credit that, instead of wrangling with Jacob about its present occupation, he peacefully withdrew to the wild mountain region of Seir. A *permanent* removal. Esau established his settlements altogether outside the limits of the Holy Land, and never again appeared as a claimant for its possession, leaving it finally in the free and undisputed ownership of Jacob. Hence, while it is said that "Esau dwelt in Mount Seir," it is appropriately added by the historian, in concluding the present section, "And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan."

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESAU'S HOUSE IN EDOM. 1. A *numerous* race. Though Esau's sons were not so many as those of Jacob, yet his descendants developed into a people much more rapidly than did those of Jacob. This may have been partly due to the circumstance that they were—2. A *mixed* race, having obviously incorporated amongst themselves a portion at least of the original Horites, whose land they appropriated, and whose political life they appear to have adopted. Then it is apparent that they were—3. An *aristocratic* race. At the time of their invasion by the Esahites, the cave-dwellers of Mount Seir had attained to something like a settled government by means of alluphim, phylarchs, or tribe princes, each of whom

enjoyed a sort of independent sovereignty; and, as has often happened since, though obliged to retire before the more powerful Canaanitish tribe, they succeeded in imposing on their conquerors their own political institutions. No fewer than fourteen of Esau's grandsons became reigning dukes in the country. Still further, it may be inferred that they were—4. A *progressive* race. The impulse towards a national life thus communicated by the Seirites does not appear to have exhausted itself by simply the formation of small independent principalities, which, as civilisation advances, are always felt to be a source of weakness rather than strength to the country whose social and political unity is thus broken up, and which eventually call for the reverse process of a unification of the different fragments, whether by free confederation or by imperial subordination. In the case of the Edomites the phylarchs were succeeded by kings, whether elective monarchs or foreign usurpers cannot be determined, though the preponderance of sentiment among interpreters is in favour of the former hypothesis. And then, finally, they were—5. An *exiled* race; that is to say, though sprung from the soil of Canaan, they developed outside its limits—Jacob's family alone, as the Heaven-appointed heirs, remaining within the borders of the Holy Land.

Learn—1. That God is able to bring about his purposes in peaceful ways when he so desireth. 2. That natural men often exemplify great virtues in their conduct. 3. That abundance of wealth is frequently a cause of separation among friends. 4. That political greatness is much more easily attained, by nations as well as individuals, than spiritual pre-eminence. 5. That a nation's advancement in civilisation is no certain guarantee of its continuance. 6. That in nature, as well as grace, the first is often last, and the last first. 7. That the heirs of the covenant are certain in the long run to obtain the inheritance.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 8.—*Esau separates from Jacob.* I. GOD REQUIRES ENTIRE DEVOTEDNESS AND FAITH. *Edom* is *allied* to the true kingdom, but is not *one with it.* We may keep in mind the relationship between the descendants of the two brothers, that we may learn the more clearly to distinguish the *true heirs* of the blessing.

II. THE TRUE BELIEVERS SET APART BY SPECIAL GRACE. The rest of the Book of Genesis follows the course of *the one family* in whose midst the *ark of the covenant,* as it were, was already resting, where was (1) *the revelation of God* and (2) the *special manifestation* of his favour, and out of which should come forth (3) the *people among the peoples,* the kingdom among the kingdoms, the Goshen in the Egypt, the seed of life in the world of death.—R.

Ver. 31.—*Delay in fulfilment of God's promises.* Between two stages of the history of the covenant family stands the genealogy of Esau's descendants. The text suggests a contrast between their course and that of the family of Jacob. On the death of Isaac Esau departed from Canaan with family and possessions (cf. ch. xxvii. 40). The desert and the valleys of Seir were more attractive than quietness of Canaan. Prosperity, such as he cared for, attended him. Among his family we read of dukes, or heads of tribes, and of kings. And what of the line of promise?—kings foretold to them (ch. xvii. 6; xxxv. 11). Yet while kings were reigning in Edom, Israelites were slaves in Egypt or wanderers in the desert. Is God slack to fulfil his word? (1 Pet. iii. 4). This is often a trial to believers (Ps. lxxiii. 3). But God's promises are sure, though the time may seem long. The fulfilment of promises of great blessings has almost always been slow, as we count it. Abraham waited long (ch. xii. 2). It was long ere the kingdom of Israel arose; far longer ere the promise of a Saviour fulfilled (ch. iii. 15; Gal. iv. 4); and still we wait for the Lord's return. The same truth appears in nature. Great and precious things are of slow growth (cf. Mark iv. 5).

Doctrinal lessons:—1. Delay serves for the trial and strengthening of faith. Faith grows by enduring trial. Mark how often the faith of eminent saints has been tried. Without faith we cannot please God; for faith believes God's truth and love, and embraces his will. Unbelief charges God with untruth (ch. iii. 4; 1 John v. 10).

Even in believers a leaven of unbelief may be at work. Trials are sent to cause faith to develop into other graces (James i. 3). 2. What springs up quickly is apt to fade quickly (cf. Exod. iii. 11 with Haggai i. 2). Danger lest what seems to be faith be merely feeling. 3. The time that seems so long is not mere delay, but preparation. While the seed lies in the earth a process is going on, though unseen, without which the perfect plant could not be formed. Compare the expression, "the fulness of time" (Gal. iv. 4), and the way in which all previous history prepared the way for the coming of Christ. These lessons apply equally to God's dealings with the world and with individuals.

Practical lessons:—1. Encouragement if disheartened by slow progress of Christ's kingdom: much labour among the heathen with little apparent result; or many efforts at home, yet ungodliness not checked. We have promises (Isa. lv. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 58). In his own time God will make them good. 2. In like manner if our own striving for personal holiness, or for good of others, seems to have little success. We require the training of disappointment to check pride (2 Cor. xii. 7), and God will see to the result (Gal. vi. 9). 3. To bear in mind that we are but instruments in the Lord's hand (1 Cor. iii. 6). Every work to be performed "looking unto Jesus" (2 Cor. xii. 10).—M.

§ 11. The Generations of Jacob (ch. xxxvii. 2—l. 26).

EXPOSITION.

1. Having disposed, in the preceding section, of the line of Esau by a brief sketch of its historical development during the two and a half centuries intervening between the founding of the Edomite empire by Esau's withdrawing to Mount Seir, and the days of Moses, the narrative reverts to the fortunes of the house of Jacob, the story of which, after having suffered a temporary interruption, it likewise carries forward to the same point of rest, viz., to the period of the sojourn in Egypt. Commencing with a glance at the inner family life of the patriarch at Mamre in the vale of Hebron, where, on returning from Padan-aram, he had finally established himself beside his aged and bed-ridden father Isaac, it recites the tragic incidents connected with the sale of Joseph by his brethren, after which, first rehearsing the further wickedness of Jacob's sons in the matter of Tamar, it pursues his eventful career from the moment of his entering Egypt as a slave in the household of Potiphar to the time when, arrayed in fine linen and decorated with a golden necklace, he rode in the second state chariot as Pharaoh's prime minister and ruler over all the land. Then, detailing the various circumstances arising from the famine which led to his discovery of his brethren, it ends by describing the descent of Jacob and his sons into Egypt and their settlement in Goshen, the death of Jacob after delivering his last prophetic blessing to his sons, and finally the decease of Joseph himself at the age of 110 years, when, as we learn from the subsequent narrative in Exodus, having lost their protector at the Court, and a dynastic change having taken place upon the throne, of Pharaoh, the sons of Israel gradually sank into oppressive and exhausting bondage.

2. By those who repudiate the Mosaic authorship of Genesis the present section is variously distributed among the alleged candidates for the honour of its composition. Beyond the ascription of ch. xxxviii. to the Jehovist, there is the most complete absence of unanimity among partitionists as to whom the different portions are to be assigned. Ch. xxxvii. 2—36, which Tuch declares to be the work of the Elohist, Bleek affirms to have been tampered with by the Jehovist, while Davidson divides it between a younger Elohist, the Jehovist, and a subsequent redactor. Ch. xxxix. is, according to Davidson, almost exclusively the composition of the Jehovist; while, according to Bleek, it has proceeded nearly entire from the pen of the Elohist, and Tuch divides it pretty evenly between the two. Tuch again thinks that chs. xl.—l. have been supplied by the fundamental document, and Bleek recognises alterations by the hand of the supplementer; but Davidson apportions most of them to the

Jehovist, giving the fragments that remain to the younger Elohist and the late redactor. The insufficient character of the grounds on which such assignments are made will be noted in the opposition; in the mean time the remark is pertinent that their very diversity is one of the strongest indirect proofs of the Mosaic authorship of the entire composition.

Ver. 2.—**These are the generations of Jacob.** The opening of a new section (cf. ch. ii. 4; v. 1, &c.). **Joseph,**—the son of Rachel, and born in Padan-aram (ch. xxx. 24)—being **seventeen years old,**—literally, *a son of seventeen years*, thus making Jacob 108—**was feeding the flock with his brethren**;—literally, *was shepherding;* not his brethren (Bush), but with his brethren, in, or among, the flock—**and the lad was**—literally, and he a lad, *ætate, moribus et innocentia* (Lyra), *non tantum ætate sed et ministerio* (Poole), but most probably designed simply as a note of his age. Pererius, following the Vulgate, connects the clause with what precedes; Calvin, Dathius, Lange, Murphy, Kalisch, and others conjoin it with the words that follow; the LXX., Willet, Rosenmüller, Keil, Ainsworth, Bush, &c. regard it as a parenthetical statement—**with**—not in the capacity of a servant (Vatablus) or of a ward (Kalisch), but of a companion—**the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives.** With these rather than the sons of Leah, as being less supercilious and haughty than the children of the first wife (Lawson), or as being less opposed to him than they (Lange), or more probably as being nearer to his own age than they (Keil), or perhaps as having been brought more into contact with the handmaids' children, and in particular with those of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, who may have been to him as a mother after Rachel's death (Rosenmüller). **And Joseph brought unto his** (rather, their) **father their evil report.** Not *accusavit fratres suos apud patrem crimine pessimo* (Vulgate), or *κατήνεγκαν ψόγον πονηρὸν προς Ισραὴλ τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν* (LXX.), as if Joseph drew down upon himself their calumnious reports, but carried to his father an evil report concerning them (Kalisch); not informed him of what he himself saw of their evil deeds (Lawson), though this need not be excluded, but repeated the דִּבָּה, or *fama*, always of a bad character (Rosenmüller), which was circulating in the district respecting them—*malos rumores qui subinde de iis spargebantur* (Dathius);—the noun being derived from an onomatopœtic root, דָּבַב, signifying to go slowly, or to creep about.

Ver. 3.—**Now** (literally, *and*) **Israel loved Joseph more than all his children** (literally, *sons*), **because he was the son of his old age**—literally, *a son of old age* (was) *he to him;* not a son possessing the wisdom of advanced years (Onkelos), but a son born in his old age (Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*), which was literally true of Joseph, since he was born in his father's ninety-first year. Yet as Joseph was only a year or two younger than the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, and as Benjamin was still later born than he, the application of this epithet to Joseph has been explained on the ground that Benjamin was at this time little more than a child (Keil), and had not much come into notice (Murphy), or perhaps was not born when this portion of the narrative was originally written ('Speaker's Commentary'); or that Joseph had obtained the name before Benjamin's birth, and that it had clung to him after that event (Inglis). Josephus ('Ant.,' ii. 2, 1) gives another reason for Jacob's partiality which is not inconsistent with the statement in the text, viz., the beauty of his person and the virtue of his mind, *διά τε τὴν τοῦ σώματος εὐγένειαν, καὶ διὰ ψυχῆς ἀρετῆς.* **And he made him a coat of many colours**—literally, *a coat* (*kithoneth*, from *kathan*, to cover; *vide* ch. iii. 21) *of ends* (Keil, Lange), *i. e.* a tunic reaching to the ancles, and with sleeves reaching to the wrists, and commonly worn by boys and girls of the upper ranks (Josephus, 'Ant.,' vii. 8, 1; 2 Sam. xiii. 18), or a coat of pieces (Kalisch, T. Lewis, Wordsworth); hence a variegated garment, *χιτὼν ποικίλος* (LXX.), *tunica polymita* (Vulgate), a coat of many colours (Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'). "Such garments are represented on some of the monuments of Egypt. At Beni-Hassan, for example, there is a magnificent excavation forming the tomb of Pihrai, a military officer of Osirtasen I., in which a train of foreign captives appears, who are supposed to be Jebusites, an inscription over one person in the group reading, "The Chief of the Land of the Jebusites." The whole of the captives are clad in parti-coloured garments, and the tunic of this individual in particular may be called "a coat of many colours' (Thornley Smith, 'Joseph and his Times,' p. 12). It has been supposed that Jacob's object in conferring this distinction on Joseph was to mark him out as the heir to whom the forfeited birthright of Reuben (1 Chron. v. 1) was to be transferred (Kurtz, Lange, Gerlach, Bush, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' &c.); but the historian only mentions it as a token of affection, such as was customary in those times for princes to bestow upon their subjects, and parents on their children (*vide* Thornley Smith, 'Joseph and his Times,' p. 11). Roberts says the

same thing is still done among the Hindoos, crimson, purple, and other colours being often tastefully sewed together for beautiful or favoured children (*vide* 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 43).

Ver. 4.—**And when** (literally, *and*) **his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they** (literally, *and they*) **hated him,**—as Esau hated Jacob (ch. xxvii. 41; cf. ch. xlix. 23)—**and could not speak peaceably unto him**—literally, *they were not able to speak of him for peace*, i. e. they could not address him in such a way as to wish him well; they could not offer him the customary salutation of *Shalom*, or Peace.

Ver. 5.—**And Joseph dreamed a dream** (in which, though, as the sequel shows, intended as a Divine communication, there was nothing to distinguish it from an ordinary product of the mind), **and he told it to his brethren**:—not in pride, since there is no reason to suppose that Joseph as yet understood the celestial origin of his dream, but in the simplicity of his heart (Kalisch, Murphy), though in doing so he was also guided, unconsciously it may be, but still really, by an overruling providence, who made use of this very telling of the dream as a step towards its fulfilment (Lawson)—**and they hated him yet the more**—literally, *and they added again to hate him.*

Ver. 6.—**And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed.** Though Joseph did not certainly know that his dream was supernatural, he may have thought that it was, the more so as dreams were in those times commonly regarded as mediums of Divine communication; and in this case it was clearly his duty to impart it to the household, and all the more that the subject of it seemed to be for them a matter of peculiar importance. In the absence of information to the contrary, we are warranted in believing that there was nothing either sinful or offensive in Joseph's spirit or manner in making known his dreams. That which appears to have excited the hostility of his brethren was not the mode of their communication, but the character of their contents.

Ver. 7.—**For** (literally, *and*), **behold, we were binding sheaves**—literally, *binding things bound*, i. e. sheaves, *alumim*, from *alam*, to bind; the order of the words and the participial form of the verb indicating that the speaker describes the vision as it appeared to his mind (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 342)—**in the field,**—literally, *in the middle of the field;* from which it would appear that Jacob was not a mere nomad, but carried on agricultural operations like his father Isaac (ch. xxvi. 12)—**and, lo,**—"the הִנֵּה, as repeated in his narration, shows that he had a presentiment of something great" (Lange)—**my sheaf arose, and also stood upright** (literally, *stood*, i. e. placed itself upright, and remained so); **and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance**—*i. e.* bowed themselves down (cf. ch. xxiii. 7, Abraham bowing to the Hethites)—**to my sheaf.** The fulfilment of this dream occurred in Egypt (*vide* ch. xlii. 6; xliii. 26; xliv. 14).

Ver. 8.—**And his brethren** (who had no difficulty in interpreting the symbol's significance) **said to him** (with mingled indignation and contempt), **Shalt thou indeed reign over us?**—literally, *reigning, wilt thou reign? i. e.* wilt thou actually *reign* over us? the emphasis resting on the action of the verb (*vide* Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 312*a*)—**or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?** The form of expression is the same as that of the preceding clause. **And they hated him yet the more** (literally *and they added again to hate him*) **for** (*i. e.* on account of) **his dreams, and for** (or, on account of) **his words.**

Ver. 9.—**And he dreamed yet another dream,**—the doubling of the dream was designed to indicate its certainty (cf. ch. xli. 32)—**and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun** (הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, the minister, from Chaldee root שְׁמַשׁ, the pael of which occurs in Dan. vii. 10) **and the moon**—הַיָּרֵחַ, probably, if the word be not a primitive, the circuit-maker, from the unused root יָרַח = אָרַח, to go about (Fürst); or the yellow one, from יָרַח = יָרַק, to be yellow, ח and ק being interchanged (Gesenius)—**and the eleven stars**—rather, eleven stars, כּוֹכָבִים, globes, or balls, from כָּבַב, to roll up in a ball (*vide* ch. i. 16)—**made obeisance to me**—literally, *bowing themselves to me*, the participles being employed *ut supra*, ver. 7. It is apparent that Joseph understood this second dream, even more plainly than the first, to foreshadow, in some way unexplained, his future supremacy over his brethren, who were unmistakably pointed out by the eleven stars of the vision; and this remarkable coincidence between the number of the stars and the number of his brethren would facilitate the inference that his parents were referred to under the other symbols of the sun and moon. In the most ancient symbology, Oriental and Grecian as well as Biblical (Numb. xxiv. 17), it was customary to speak of noble personages, princes, &c., under such figures; and the employment of such terminology by a nomadic people like the Hebrew patriarchs, who constantly lived beneath the open sky, may almost be regarded as a water-mark attesting the historic credi-

bility of this page at least of the sacred record (*vide* Hävernick, 'Introd.,' § 21), in opposition to Bohlen, who finds in the symbolical character of Joseph's dreams an evidence of their unreality, and De Wette, who explains them as the offspring of his aspiring mind.

Ver. 10.—**And he told it to his father, and to his brethren**—whom it manifestly concerned, as, for the like reason, he had reported the first dream only to his brethren. That he does not tell it to his mother may be an indication that Rachel was by this time dead. **And his father rebuked him,**—either to avoid irritating his brethren (Calvin), or to repress an appearance of pride in Joseph (Lange, Murphy, Inglis), or to express his own surprise (Candlish) or irritation (Keil), or sense of the absurdity of the dream (Lawson), which he further demonstrated when he added—**and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother**—(1) "Rachel, who was neither forgotten nor lost" (Keil), who may possibly have been living at the date of the dream ('Speaker's Commentary'), though then Joseph could not have had eleven brothers; who, being dead, was referred to in order to show the impossibility of its ever being fulfilled (Kalisch, Pererius); or (2) Leah, as the chief mistress of Jacob's household (Willet, Hughes, Inglis); or (3) Bilhah, Rachel's maid, who had probably acted as Joseph's mother after Rachel's death (Jewish interpreters, Grotius, and others); or, what seems more probable, (4) the term "mother" is here introduced simply for the sake of giving completeness to the symbol (Kurtz, Murphy)—**and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee**—Joseph's brethren ultimately did so in Egypt (ch. xli. 6); Joseph's father practically did so when he recognised Joseph's greatness and depended on him for support (ch. xlvii. 12). It is certain that Leah died before the immigration to Egypt (ch. xlix. 31), and it cannot be determined whether Bilhah or Zilpah went to Egypt—**to the earth.** Jacob seems here, by intensifying Joseph's language, to resent the claim which it conveyed.

Ver. 11.—**And his brethren envied him.** The verb קָנָא (unused in Kal), to become red in the face, seems to indicate that the hatred of Joseph's brethren revealed itself in scowling looks. **But his father observed the saying**—literally, *kept the word*, διετήρησε τὸ ῥῆμα (LXX.). Cf. Dan. vii. 28; Luke ii. 51.

HOMILETICS

Vers. 2—11.—*Joseph in his father's house.* I. JOSEPH EMPLOYED WITH HIS BRETHREN. 1. *With them in the sense of as well as them.* That is to say, Joseph no more than the other sons of his father was trained to indolence. It is the duty of parents to educate their children in some useful and honourable calling. Even when not required for procuring daily bread, it is of advantage as a means of withdrawing one from temptations which would otherwise beset him, while it largely enhances the enjoyment of existence, and enables one to contribute more or less directly to the sum of human happiness. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and even Laban, all brought up their sons to honest toil. 2. *With them in the sense of like them.* That is, he was, as they had been before him, instructed in the business of a husbandman and shepherd. There is evidence that Jacob combined the callings of an agriculturist as well as sheep-farmer, and trained his boys to sow and reap and bind sheaves as well as tend the flocks and herds on his estate. From this, however, it were wrong to argue that all the children in a family should be trained alike, or put to learn the same craft or profession. In Jacob's day and Joseph's there was little choice of openings for young men who had aspirations above the crook or the plough. But in these times the avocations of men are as diverse as their gifts; and in all respects it is better—more beneficial to society at large, and more advantageous for the individual—that a wise discrimination be exercised by parents and guardians in selecting spheres of labour for those dependent on or intrusted to them that shall be suited to their gifts and tastes. 3. *With them in the sense of beside them.* Joseph accompanied his brethren when they tended the flocks or reaped the ripened grain, and in particular associated himself, for reasons suggested in the Exposition, with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. It was a privilege which Joseph enjoyed that he did not need to go from home to learn his trade; and doubtless Joseph's amiable disposition would make the society of his father's sons more agreeable to him than the company of strangers.

II. JOSEPH PREFERRED ABOVE HIS BRETHREN. 1. *By his father.* (1) The ground

of Jacob's partiality for Joseph. He was the son of Jacob's old age. However this expression may be explained (*vide* Exposition), the amount of it seems to be that Joseph had come to gladden Jacob's heart after a considerable period of waiting, and at a time when Jacob was beginning to feel himself an old man. Hence more than to any of his other children Jacob's affections went out to the firstborn of Rachel, and this affection could not fail to strengthen after Rachel's death. It is just possible also that it was kept alive and fostered by a reminiscence of Rachel's beauty, which he saw reproduced in the well-proportioned frame and finely-cut features of the growing lad. Anyhow, Jacob's fondness for Joseph was palpable; and without affirming that it was right, it may at least be contended that it was natural, the more especially when Joseph's piety is contrasted with the notorious wickedness of Jacob's other sons. (2) The exhibition of Jacob's partiality for Joseph. Many parents who find themselves in Jacob's situation, drawn to one child more than another in their families, make an effort at least to conceal a preference which in their inmost hearts they cannot but feel to be justifiable. But Jacob, with a sad lack of prudence, displayed his superior estimation of Rachel's son by presenting him with a rich and valuable coat of ends or pieces (*vide* Exposition). As might have been expected, such a mark of preference was distasteful to his other children, and, had it not been for Joseph's superior character, might have been morally hurtful to Joseph himself. As it was, it was no kindness to Joseph, but only a foolish gratification to Joseph's father. 2. *By God*. Joseph was honoured to receive dreams prophetic of his future greatness. The first, the dream of the bowing sheaves, was a Divine foreshadowing of his advancement above his brethren; and the second, the dream of the nodding orbs, of his elevation above all the members of his family. Even had they not concerned himself at all, to have been made the recipient of Divine communications was an honour; much more when these communications related to his own exaltation. This preference of Joseph was unquestionably gracious, but it was also natural (1 Sam. ii. 30)

III. JOSEPH HATED BY HIS BRETHREN. 1. *The cause of their hatred.* This was—(1) The superior place which he enjoyed in their father's affection (ver. 4). Parents may here observe the danger of cherishing, and especially of manifesting, a preference of one member of the family above another. Unless in very exceptional circumstances, all are equally entitled to a father's care and a mother's love. (2) The superior piety he displayed above themselves. It is difficult to credit the actors in the Shechemite and Dothan tragedies with anything in the shape of religion. Certainly they were not looked upon as exemplary characters by those who had the misfortune to live beside them. Out of their father's sight they shook off any little restraint which his presence may have inspired. Their scandalous behaviour became the talk of every neighbourhood they chanced to visit; and Joseph hearing it, as in duty bound, reported it to Jacob. Not that the mere reporting of it at home would much concern these reckless youths. Possibly it would exasperate their minds against their brother. But the thing which would incense them most would be the disinclination which he showed to run with them into the same excess of riot. (3) The superior honour he received from God. The brethren clearly enough understood the dreams to contain a prognostication of Joseph's future, else why did they allow themselves to become inflamed with anger on account of a foolish boy's fancies? At least they believed Joseph regarded them in this light, and they hated him on that account. 2. *The progress of their hatred.* (1) They omitted to give him the customary salutation of Shalem. It is a bad sign when a man declines to exchange friendly greetings with his neighbour, and much more with his brother. (2) They passed on to deep and bitter hatred. They hated him yet the more for his dreams and his words. Evil passions have a tendency to grow, and should be nipped in the bud. *Obsta principiis.* (3) They envied him; the fierce malignity of their enraged spirits burning in their bosoms, suffusing their countenances with ominous looks and angry scowls, and generally expressing itself in dislike, irritation, and annoyance. 3. *The end of their hatred.* It was impossible that the gathering storm should continue long without bursting. All things mundane, evil as well as good, strive after completeness. "Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin: sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death' (James i. 15). Hence, "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer"

(1 John iii. 15); initially in thought, and ultimately, granting time and opportunity, in deed. The murderous feeling of Joseph's brethren very speedily found occasion to become the fratricidal act.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxxvii.—*The representative man.* Jacob may be said to fall into the background from this time until his parting benediction. The kingdom of God is represented in Joseph and his history. The main points in this chapter are—

I. God's distinguishing grace to Joseph, separating him from his brethren in character, in his father's affection, in the method of his life, in the communications of the Spirit. Joseph is the type of the believer, faithful to the covenant, amongst both the Canaanitish heathen and the unfaithful children of the covenant, the patriarchs.

II. The working of evil passions and moral impurity brought to a climax through the development of God's grace in the individual. Joseph brought the evil report to Jacob. Joseph dreamed. Joseph was evidently both in himself superior to his brethren and more favoured by God. That is the old story—the Cain spirit developed by contact with the Abel spirit. A time of special grace is always a time of special wickedness and judgment. Witness the advent of the Lord, the Reformation period, the revival of religion in the last century, leading on to the outburst of both wickedness and judgment at the end.

III. The dreams of the pious lad were themselves steps in the course of revelation. The dominion which was foreshadowed was that of the spiritual kingdom over the unspiritual.

IV. The providential fulfilment of the promise. Partly through the personal character of Joseph, partly through the evil passions of his brethren, partly through the apparently casual incidents of the neighbourhood, partly through the Spirit of righteousness working in the heart of Reuben, partly through the weakness and fondness of Jacob. How strangely "all things work together" in God's hands! He weaves the web composed of many single threads into one united, orderly pattern as a whole in which we are able to trace his own thought and purpose.

V. Joseph in the pit while his brethren sit down to eat bread represents the believer suffering in the midst of an unbelieving world. A type of Jesus cast into the pit of his humiliation, while the Jewish people despised and rejected his claims, his prophetic words, his evident favour with God, and by their transactions with Gentiles, the Romans, gave him up to what *seemed* to them ruin, but what *was* the crowning of his head with glory. We begin to see at this point that, as the Psalmist sang, "the word of the Lord tried him."

VI. The deliverance of Joseph and his transference to the sphere of his future triumph are effected through Judah immediately, through the other brethren and the Ishmaelites or Midianites secondarily. These names of Judah, Ishmael, Midian remind us that the fleshly links which bind the descendants of Abraham together are not lost sight of by God, are called in to serve the purposes of grace, but not to take the place of the true spiritual work, which goes on in its own appointed channel. So in the history of the Church, while there are many secondary influences at work, still there is a remnant according to the election of grace in which there is the real continuity of Divine dealings.

VII. The genuine grief of Reuben, the barbarous inhumanity towards their father of the fallen sons, the overwhelming sorrow of the aged, heart-broken Jacob, the rising up of all his sons and daughters to comfort him, are all beautiful and significant touches of nature in this history, which remind us that we are not "following cunningly-devised fables," and that God's gracious kingdom of truth and love does not annihilate the human in order to reveal the Divine, but puts its rainbow on the cloud.

VIII. The introduction of Egypt again into the history. Egypt is the type of the world, as built upon the foundation of fallen humanity alone, without the special grace of God. Into that bulk of the unrenewed race the leaven of the kingdom must

be put. The connection between the covenant family and Egypt, which we trace in the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as afterwards in their descendants, represents at once (1) the thoroughly human character of the kingdom that God would set up in the earth, for the people of God found much in Egypt which they carried away with them afterwards, and assimilated to their own specially-communicated faith; (2) the breadth of the promises of God—the separation of the one people was for the sake of all the families of the earth.—R.

Vers. 2—4.—*Joseph at home.* "Joseph, being seventeen years old," &c. Picturesque scene is the encampment of Jacob. How well the dark camel-hair tents harmonise with the general character of the spots in which they are pitched. Peace and purity should dwell there. Ten men of the tribe of Jacob are most depraved, but their characters only threw into brighter prominence that of Joseph. It is probable that Jacob gave greater attention to the training of Joseph than to that of his brethren. He showed favouritism also. His act of giving him a garb of varied colour may not altogether have been so foolish and weak as sometimes it has been supposed to be. It was simply an ordinary Eastern way of indicating that Joseph was to be the future leader and sheik of the encampment. Think of Joseph's home life, and learn—

I. That at home we should, like Joseph, learn to prepare for future life. Doubtless Jacob would tell Joseph of the promises of God to Abraham, of the tradition of the Deluge and the Fall; probably also of his own fleeing from home, and his dream in the desert, when he saw "the great altar-stair sloping through darkness up to God," and the angels ascending and descending. Joseph always afterwards has great faith in dreams. No book had he. The Bible was not written. Traditions and oral teaching formed his mental training.

II. At home we should always have some employment. His father loved him too dearly to allow him to grow up in habits of idleness. He learned to handle the crook and to become a faithful messenger. No work is to be despised, for all may be a preparation for future usefulness.

III. At home we should not willingly be witnesses of wrong-doing. The lives of Joseph's brethren were sinful, and their doings deceitful. Some things he is obliged to know about of which it is dangerous to keep silence. The welfare of the whole tribe was being risked by the elder brothers, and Joseph, fearing that, tells his father, or seeks counsel that he may be strengthened to resist evil influence.

IV. At home we may have glowing visions of the future. The two dreams concerning the sheaves, and the sun and moon and stars, brought hate from his brethren, but they had an influence on Joseph's after life. They were remarkably fulfilled. We all have some such visions. We build "castles in the air." The stern realities of life tone down our dreams. It is well to have some such dreams. Without them few make any advance in life. We are not to be like mere senseless stones, but growing plants. Better is it to bear fruit than to wait to become only the sport of circumstances.—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 12.—**And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem**—*i. e.* the modern Nâblous, in the plain of Muknah, which belonged to Jacob partly by purchase and partly by conquest (*vide* ch. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 27). Shechem was at a considerable distance from the vale of Hebron, where the patriarchal family at this time resided.

Ver. 13.—**And Israel** (*vide* ch. xxxii. 28; xxxv. 10) **said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed** the flock (literally, *Are not thy brethren shepherding?*) **in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them.** Either he was solicitous of the safety of his sons while in the vicinity of Shechem (Lawson), or he hoped to effect a reconciliation between them and Joseph (Candlish). **And he** (*i. e.* Joseph, in response to this invitation, expressed a willingness to undertake a mission to his brethren, and) **said to him, Here am I.**

Ver. 14.—**And he** (Jacob) **said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren** (literally, *see the place of thy brethren*), **and well with the flocks** (literally, *and the peace of the flock*); **and bring me word again.** So (literally, *and*) **he sent him out of the vale of Hebron** (*vide* ch. xxxv. 27), **and he came to Shechem**—a distance of sixty miles.

Vers. 15, 16.—**And a certain man** or simply

a man) **found him, and, behold,** he was **wandering in the field** (obviously seeking some thing or person): **and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren**:—or, more emphatically, My brethren I (*sc.* am) seeking—**tell me, I pray thee, where they feed** their flocks—or, Where (are) they shepherding?

Ver. 17.—**And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan**—*Dothaim*, "the Two Wells," a place twelve miles north of Samaria in the direction of the plain of Esdraelon, situated on the great caravan road from Mount Gilead to Egypt, the scene of one of the greatest miracles of Elisha the prophet (2 Kings vi. 13—18), and, though now a deserted ruin, still called by its ancient name. **And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.** "Just beneath Tell Dothan, which still preserves its name, is the little oblong plain, containing the best pasturage in the country, and well chosen by Jacob's sons when they had exhausted for a time the wider plain of Shechem" (Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 132; cf. Thomson, 'Land and Book,' p. 466).

Ver. 18.—**And when** (literally, *and*) **they saw him afar off, even** (or, and) **before he came near unto them, they** (literally, *and they*) **conspired against him** (or, dealt with him fraudulently) **to slay him.**

Ver. 19.—**And they said one to another** (literally, *a man to his brother*), **Behold, this dreamer**—literally, *this lord of dreams* (cf. ch. xiv. 13; Exod. xxiv. 14)—**cometh**—expressive of rancour, contempt, and hatred.

Ver. 20.—**Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit** (literally, *into one of the pits or cisterns* in the neighbourhood), **and we will say** (*sc.* to his father and ours), **Some** (literally, *an*) **evil beast hath devoured him** (which will account for his disappearance); **and we shall see what will become of his dreams**—or, what his dreams will be.

Vers. 21, 22.—**And Reuben** (the eldest son, and therefore probably regarding himself as in some degree responsible for Joseph's safety) **heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him**—literally, *Let us not destroy his life* (*nephesh*). **And Reuben said** (further) **unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness** (*i. e.* into a dry pit that was near), **and lay no hand upon him; that** (the adverb indicates the purpose Reuben had in view) **he might rid him** (translated above deliver him) **out of their hands, to deliver him** (or, more correctly, to return him) **to his father again.**

Ver. 23.—**And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours**—*i. e.* his coat of ends, or coat of pieces (*vide* on ver. 3)—**that was on him.**

Vers. 24, 25.—**And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit** was **empty,** there was **no water in it.** Cisterns when empty, or only covered with mud at the bottom, were sometimes used as temporary prisons (Jer. xxxviii. 6; xl. 15). **And**—leaving him, as they must have calculated, to perish by a painful death through starvation, with exquisite cold-bloodedness, paying no heed to his piteous outcries and appeals (ch. xli. 21)—**they sat down** (the callous composure of the act indicates deplorable brutality on the part of Joseph's brethren) **to eat bread** (perhaps with a secret feeling of satisfaction, if not also exultation, that they had effectually disposed of the young man and his dreams): **and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company**—*orchath*, from *arach*, to walk; a band of travellers, especially of merchantmen; a caravan; συνοδία, ὁδοιπόροι (LXX.; cf. Job vi. 19)—**of Ishmaelites**—Arabs descended from Ishmael, who occupied the district lying between Egypt and Assyria (ch. xxv. 18), and, as appears from the record, carried on a trade with the former country. That Ishmael's descendants should already have developed into a trading nation will not be surprising (Bohlen) if one reflects that Ishmael may have married in his eighteenth or twentieth year, *i. e.* about 162 years before the date of the present occurrence, that four generations may have been born in the interval, and that, if Ishmael's sons had only five sons each, his posterity in the fifth generation (not reckoning females) may have amounted to 15,000 persons (Murphy). But in point of fact the Ishmaelites spoken of are not described as nations—simply as a company of merchants, without saying how numerous it was (Hävernick, 'Introd.,' § 21)—**came** (literally, *coming*) **from Gilead** (*vide* ch. xxxi. 21) **with** (literally, *and*) **their camels bearing spicery**—נְכאת, either an infinitive from נָכָא, to break, to grind (?), and signifying a pounding, breaking in pieces, hence aromatic powder (Gesenius); or a contraction from נְכָאוֹת (Ewald), meaning that which is powdered or pulverised. Rendered θυμιαμάτα (LXX.), *aromata* (Vulgate), στύραξ (Aquila), it was probably the gum tragacanth, many kinds of which appear in Syria (Fürst, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Murphy), or storax, the resinous exudation of the *styrax officinale*, which abounds in Palestine and the East (Aquila, Bochart, Bush, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis)—**and balm**—צֳרִי (in pause צרי, after vau of union צְרִי), mentioned as one of the most precious fruits of Palestine (ch. xliii. 11), rendered

ῥητίνη (LXX.) and *resina* (Vulgate), and derived from צָרָה, to flow, to run (hence, literally, *an outflowing*, or out-dropping), was unquestionably a balsam, but of what tree cannot now be ascertained, distilling from a tree or fruit growing in Gilead, and highly prized for its healing properties (Jer. viii. 22; xlvi. 11). *Vide* Lexicons (Gesenius and Fürst) *sub voce;* Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 2142; Kalisch *in loco*—**and myrrh,**—לֹט, στακτή (LXX.), *stacte* (Vulgate), *pistacia* (Chaldee, Syriac, Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 1424), was more probably ladanum (Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*), an odoriferous gum formed upon the leaves of the cistus-rose, a shrub growing in Arabia, Syria, and Palestine (*vide* Herod., iii. 112; Pliny, 'N. H.,' xii. 37; Celsius, 'Hierob.,' i. 280—288)—**going**—the caravan route from Gilead crossed the Jordan in the neighbourhood of Bersan, and, sweeping through Jenin and the plain of Dothan, joined another track leading southwards from Damascus by way of Ramleh and Gaza (*vide* Robinson, iii. 27, and cf. Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 132)—**to carry it down to Egypt.** At that time the land of the Pharaohs was the chief emporium for the world's merchandise.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 12—25.—*Joseph among his brethren at Dothan.* I. THE FRIENDLY MISSION. 1. *Its local destination.* This was Shechem, at a distance of sixty miles from Hebron, where Jacob had previously resided for a number of years and acquired a small estate (ch. xxxiii. 18, 19), where Jacob's sons had committed, a few years before, the terrible atrocity which made the name of Israel stink throughout the land (ch. xxxiv. 26—30); and where now Joseph's brethren were shepherding their flocks, having gone thither either on account of the excellent pasture, or in order to be beyond the reach of Joseph and his tale-bearing, or perhaps with a mind to keep an eye on their father's estate. 2. *Its kindly intention.* Joseph was despatched to this important sheep-station in the north to inquire after the welfare of his brethren. That Jacob should have sent a son so tender and beloved on a journey so arduous and an errand so fraught with danger to himself, considering the well-known hostility of his brethren towards him, if a proof of Jacob's want of consideration, was also a mark of his parental solicitude for his sons' behaviour, as well as a sign of his apprehensions for their safety, venturing, as they had, to revisit the scene of their former crimes, and perhaps it may be added, an indication of his desire to effect a reconciliation between Joseph and his brethren. 3. *Its cheerful susception.* Though realising better than his father did the perilous character of the enterprise, in consequence of knowing more exactly than his father the depth of malignant feeling entertained towards him by his brethren, Joseph did not hesitate to comply with his father's instructions, but, making nothing of the long journey, and keeping silent as to the risks of increased hatred, if nothing more, which he must have known that mission would entail upon him, cheerfully replied, Here am I. What a bright example of true filial piety and obedience! 4. *Its successful completion.* Arriving at Shechem, he first failed to find his brethren, and then lost his way, but ultimately, on being directed by a stranger, discovered them at Dothan. The perseverance of Joseph in carrying through his father's commission may be profitably studied, as a pattern to all to whom any sort of work, but more especially Christian work, is intrusted.

II. THE DIABOLICAL CONSPIRACY. 1. *Its innocent occasion*—the approach of Joseph in his long-sleeved and long-skirted tunic. Like a gunpowder train that has been carefully prepared, and only wants the application of a spark to produce an explosion, the brethren of Joseph were only needing some trifling incident to elicit all the fratricidal hate which was already growing in their bosoms, and that incident was supplied by the sight of the coat of ends. It was a striking illustration of how great results frequently proceed from apparently insignificant causes (James iii. 4, 5). 2. *Its murderous character.* It aimed at the destruction of Joseph's life. With unexampled unanimity, not a voice was raised against the proposal (perhaps made by Simeon) to kill him and cast his lifeless body into a pit. The proposal of Reuben must have been understood by the others as only a more excruciatingly cruel way of inflicting death, viz., by starvation. See here in Jacob's family a development of

the same spirit of murder as existed in Adam's. Like Cain, the sons of Jacob were of that wicked one, and slew (in intention at least) their brother, and for the same reason (1 John iii. 12). 3. *Its impious design*—to spoil his dreams. From this it is evident that they regarded his dreams as a Heaven-sent prognostication of his future greatness; else, if they regarded them as purely boyish fancies, why should they have felt annoyed at what was so evidently groundless? Hence, in seeking to prevent the realisation of his dreams they were actually fighting against God. But it is just precisely in proportion as wicked men see God's hand in any prophecy or programme that they take measures to insure its defeat (cf. 1 Sam. xix. 1; 2 Kings vi. 14). 4. *Its ruthless execution.* They took him and cast him into a pit. The crime was perpetrated (1) with insolent humiliation—they stripped the poor lad of his pretty coat; (2) with violent brutality—they cast him into the pit; Jeremiah was let down by cords (Jer. xxxviii. 6); (3) with relentless cruelty—they heeded not his outcries and entreaties (ch. xlii. 21, 22); and (4) with exquisite cold-bloodedness—having despatched their infernal business, with infinite nonchalance the ruffians sat down to eat bread, to regale their appetites after a good day's work.

III. THE ATTEMPTED RESCUE. The stratagem of Reuben was—1. *Mercifully designed.* Reuben, in some respects not a person to be greatly admired, weak and vacillating in his character, and easily drawn aside by stronger natures into sinful courses, appears in this matter to have been the only one of Joseph's brethren in whom the natural affections of a brother were not completely overborne. Though he wanted the courage to resist his stronger-minded brothers, he seems to have conceived the purpose of saving, if he could, the life of Joseph. So far the stratagem was good, only it was—2. *Timidly planned.* The narrative would almost seem to convey that Reuben in the first onset of his opposition to his brother's nefarious intentions had succeeded in wresting Joseph from their hands. Had he at that moment asserted himself with vigour and boldness, as became the firstborn of the house, he might have saved Joseph altogether. But, alas, true to his feeble and pusillanimous character, he allowed himself to be overcome by the clamours of his fiercer-natured brethren, and only proposed that instead of imbruing their hands in Joseph's blood they should inflict on him the horrors of starvation. In making such a proposal of course Reuben hoped to be able to effect his deliverance, in which he might have succeeded, had he acted with promptitude and decision. But instead his stratagem was—3. *Weakly carried through.* Where Reuben was when his brethren were comforting their hearts with a dinner after Joseph's consignment to the cistern, and concocting the matter of his sale, the narrative does not say; but most likely he was by himself, deliberating, and resolving, and hesitating, and delaying, instead of acting. Hence his stratagem was—4. *Completely defeated.* By the time he had got his mind made up to act it was too late. When he returned to the pit Joseph was gone, and, like many another procrastinator, he could only bemoan his own folly.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 14, 15.—*Joseph leaving home.* "Go, I pray thee, see whether," &c. Joseph left home unexpectedly. He knew not when he left it to seek his brethren that he would never come back again. After a longer journey than he anticipated Joseph finds his brethren.

I. Like many leaving home, Joseph MET WITH FAITHFUL GUIDES. There are generally companions, teachers, ministers to help.

II. Like many leaving home, Joseph FELL INTO SNARES. He could not help himself. The snares were not such as were willingly entered. The wicked entrapped him. On this youth, far from home, defenceless, and kindly-intentioned, nine cowardly men fell.

III. Like many away from home, Joseph FOUND THAT GOD CARED FOR HIM WHEN HIS EARTHLY FATHER COULD NOT. Reuben was the means of saving him from death. Sold into slavery, he was still on the highway to eminence. We have to beware of hateful and murderous thoughts, remembering "that he that hateth his brother is" (so

far as intent goes) "a murderer." In all journeyings we have to commit our way unto the Lord, and he will guide and defend.—H.

Vers. 20, 21.—*God's providence and man's responsibility.* I. GOD'S PURPOSES CARRIED OUT BY MEN IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR OWN PLANS. The word to Abraham (ch. xv. 13) does not seem to have been thought of by Jacob. After long wandering he seemed to be settled in Canaan. But God was bringing to pass his word. Jacob's injudicious fondness for Joseph, the anger and murderous design of his brethren (cf. John xi. 50; Acts iii. 17), Reuben's timid effort for his deliverance (cf. Acts v. 38), Judah's worldly wise counsel (cf. Luke xiii. 31), Joseph's imprisonment by Potiphar, the conspiracy in Pharaoh's household, were so many steps by which the sojourn in Egypt was brought about. So in the founding of the Christian Church. The writing on the cross (John xix. 20) pointed to three separate lines of history, two of them pagan, which combined to bring about the sacrifice of Christ and the spread of the gospel. So in the case of individuals. God's promises are sure (2 Cor. i. 20). There may seem to be many hindrances, from ourselves (Ps. lxv. 3) or from circumstances; but no cause for doubt (Luke xii. 32; xxii. 35). Unlikely or remote causes are often God's instruments. The envy of the Jews opened for St. Paul, through his imprisonment, a door to the Gentiles which otherwise he would not have had (Acts xxi. 28; Phil. i. 13).

II. IT IS NO EXCUSE FOR WRONG-DOING THAT IT HAS WORKED GOOD (cf. Rom. ix. 19). The cruel act of his brethren brought about the realising of Joseph's dreams, his greatness in Egypt, the support of the whole family during the famine, and the fulfilment of God's word; but not the less was it wrong (ch. xlii. 21; cf. Matt. xxvi. 24). Moral guilt depends not upon the result, but on the motive. God has given the knowledge of redemption to move our will, and the example of Christ and the moral law to guide our lives. The fulfilment of his purposes belongs to himself. He needs not our help to bring it to pass. It is not his will that we should forsake his immutable rules of right and wrong, even for the sake of bringing on the fulfilment of prophecy. Much evil has sprung from neglect of this—*e. g.* the maxim, Faith need not be kept with heretics. God's will and promise, Ps. xxxvii. 3—5.

III. TO EACH ONE THERE IS A HISTORY WITHIN A HISTORY. Our actions lead to their appropriate results (Gal. vi. 8) at the same time that they tend to carry out God's purposes, whether we will or not. Each one is a factor in the great plan which in the course of ages God is working out (John v. 17). Men such as they are, wise or ignorant, guided by the Spirit or resisting him, loving or selfish, pressing upwards or following worldly impulses, all are so directed by a power they cannot comprehend that they bring about what he wills (Ps. ii. 2—4). But along with this there is a history which concerns ourselves, which we write for ourselves, the issues of which depend immediately upon ourselves. To each a measure of time, knowledge, opportunity has been given, on the use of which the line of our course depends. Nothing can turn aside the course of God's providence; but upon our faithfulness or unfaithfulness depends our place and joy in it. Hence encouragement to work for Christ, however small our powers (1 Sam. xiv. 6). The little is accepted as well as the great; and as "workers together with him" (2 Cor. vi. 1) our work cannot be in vain.—M.

EXPOSITION.

Vers. 26, 27. —**And Judah** (apparently shrinking from the idea of murder) **said unto his brethren, What profit is it if** (literally, *what of advantage that*) **we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?** (*i. e.* and hide the fact of his murder). **Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him** (literally, *and our hand, let it not be upon him*, i. e. to slay him); **for he is our brother and our flesh**—or, more expressly, our brother and our flesh he (cf. ch. xxix. 14). **And his brethren were content**—literally, *hearkened*, viz., to the proposal.

Ver. 28.—**Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen**;—literally, *and passed by the men, Midianites* (by country), *merchants* (by profession). On the different appellations given to the traders *vide infra*, ver. 36—**and they**—not the Midianites (Davidson), but Joseph's brethren—**drew and lifted up**

Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver—literally, *for twenty* (sc. shekels) *of silver* = £2 10*s.*; the price afterwards fixed for a boy between five and twenty (Levit. xxvii. 5), the average price of a slave being thirty shekels (Ezek. xxi. 32), and Joseph only bringing twenty because he was a lad (Kurtz), because the Midianites desired to make money by the transaction (Keil), perhaps because his brethren wished to avoid the reproach of having acted from love of gain (Gerlach), but most probably because Joseph's brethren cared little what they had for him, if so be they were rid of him (Lawson). On the term *keseph* vide ch. xx. 16. **And they brought Joseph into Egypt**—where they in turn disposed of their purchase, doubtless at a profit (ver. 36).

Vers. 29, 30.—**And Reuben** (in whose absence apparently the scheme of sale had been concocted and carried through) **returned to the pit** (obviously with a view to deliver Joseph); **and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes**—in token of his mingled grief and horror at the discovery (cf. ver. 34; xliv. 13; 2 Sam. xiii. 31; 2 Kings xviii. 37; Job i. 20). **And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child** (or young man, as in ch. iv. 23, where יֶלֶד in the one hemistich is equivalent to אִישׁ in the other) **is not; and I, whither shall I go**—*i. e.* however shall I account for his disappearance?

Vers. 31, 32.—**And they**—*i. e.* Joseph's brethren, including Reuben, to whom manifestly the matter had been explained (Candlish thinks Reuben may have been deceived by his brethren), and who wanted the courage either to expose their wickedness or to dissent from their device for deceiving Jacob—**took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats,**—more correctly, a he-goat of the goats, since the name of goat seems to have belonged in a wider sense to other animals also (Gesenius); usually understood to mean the somewhat older he-goat which was used as a sin offering—Levit. xvi. 9; xxiii. 19; Numb. vii. 16; xv. 24 (Fürst)—**and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colours** (*vide* on ver. 3), **and they brought** it (or caused it to be brought by the hands of a servant) **to their father, and said** (of course by the lips of the messenger), **This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.** Either Jacob's sons had not the fortitude to witness the first outburst of his grief, or they had not the effrontery requisite to carry through their scheme in their own persons, and were accordingly obliged to employ another, probably a slave, to carry home the bloody coat to Jacob in Hebron.

Ver. 33.—**And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast** (*vide* ver. 20) **hath devoured him** (this was precisely what his sons meant him to infer); **Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces**—טֹרַף טָרֹף, the inf. abs. Kal with the Pual expressing undoubted certainty.

Ver. 34.—**And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins,**—שַׂק (cf. σάκος, σάκκος, *saccus*), the usual dress of mourners (2 Sam. iii. 31; Neh. ix. 1; Esther iv. 1), was a coarse, thick haircloth, of which corn sacks were also made (ch. xlii. 25), and which in cases of extreme mental distress was worn next the skin (1 Kings xxi. 27)—**and mourned for his son many days.** Though twenty-two years elapsed before Jacob again beheld his son, and though doubtless the old man's grief for the premature and violent death, as he imagined, of Rachel's child was little abated by the lapse of time, yet the expression "many days" may only be employed to mark the intensity of Jacob's sorrow, which continued longer than the customary mournings of the period.

Ver. 35.—**And all his sons**—the criminals become comforters (Lange)—**and all his daughters**—either Jacob had other daughters besides Dinah (Kalisch, Gerlach, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or these included his daughters-in-law, the word being employed as in Ruth i. 11, 12 (Willet, Bush, Murphy), or the term is used freely without being designed to indicate whether he had one or more girls in his family (Augustine)—**rose up to comfort him** (this implies the return of Jacob's brethren to Hebron); **but he refused to be comforted; and he said** (here the thought must be supplied: It is vain to ask me to be comforted), **For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning**—or, retaining the order of the Hebrew words, which is almost always more expressive than those adopted by our translators, I will go down to my son mourning to, or towards, in the direction of, Sheol. The term שְׁאֹל—more fully שְׁאוֹל, an inf. absol. for a noun, either (1) from שָׁאַל = שָׁעַל, to go down, to sink (Gesenius, Fürst), signifying the hollow place; or, (2) according to the older lexicographers and etymologists, from שָׁאַל, to ask, and meaning either the region which inexorably summons all men into its shade, the realm that is always craving because never satisfied (Keil, Murphy, Lange), or the land that excites questioning and wonder in the human heart, "the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns" (T. Lewis)—is not the grave, since Jacob's son had no grave, but the place of departed spirits, the unseen world (ᾍδης, LXX.) into

which the dead disappear, and where they consciously exist (2 Sam. xii. 23). **Thus** (literally, *and*) **his father** (not Isaac) **wept for him.**

Ver. 36.—**And the Midianites**—or Medanites, descendants of Medan, a brother of Midian, both of whom were sons of Abraham by Keturah (ch. xxv. 2). That the Arabian merchants are called Ishmaelites (ver. 27), Midianites (ver. 28), and Medanites (ver. 36), is explained as an evidence of varying legends (Tuch, Bleek, Davidson, Colenso), but is better accounted for as indicating that the traders were composed of men of various nations (Clericus); that the Midianites, Ishmaelites, and Medanites were often confounded from their common parentage and closely similar habits (Keil); that the narrator did not intend to lay stress upon the nationality, but upon the occupation, of the travellers (Hävernick); that the proprietors of the caravan were Ishmaelites, and the company attending it Midianites or Medanites (Lange); that the Ishmaelites were the genus, and the Midianites and Medanites the species, of the same nation (Rosenmüller, Quarry); that the Midianites or Medanites were the actual purchasers of Joseph, while the caravan took its name from the Ishmaelites, who formed the larger portion of it (Murphy)—**sold him into Egypt** (*i. e.* having brought him into Egypt, perhaps, as Luther conjectures, passing through Hebron on the way, sold him) **unto Potiphar,**—the name is abbreviated from Poti-Phera (ch. xli. 50), *i. e.* he who belongs to the sun (Gesenius, *sub voce*). The LXX. render Πετεφρῆς or Πετεφρῆ—**an officer**—סָרִיס, from סרס, an unused root signifying to pull up by the roots, originally means a eunuch (Isa. lvi. 3, 4), such as Oriental monarchs were accustomed to set over their harems (Esther ii. 3, 14, 15; iv. 5), but is here employed to denote an officer or courtier generally, without any reference to the primary signification, since Potiphar was married—**of Pharaoh's** (*vide* ch. xii. 15), and **captain of the guard**—literally, *captain of the slaughterers*, i. e. chief officer of the executioners, the nature of whose duties may be understood from the fact that he was keeper of the State prison, "where the king's prisoners were bound" (ch. xxxix. 20).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 26—36.—*Joseph carried by Midianites to Egypt.* I. THE INFAMOUS SALE. 1. *The wicked proposal.* "Come, and let us sell him." By whatever motives Judah was actuated, the notion that either he or his brethren had a right thus to dispose of Joseph's life was not simply an open violation of the Divine law which constituted all men with equal rights, and in particular made every man his brother's keeper, not his brother's destroyer or proprietor, but a hideous discovery of the utter perversion of moral nature which had taken place in the case of Joseph's brethren. So low had they now sunk, that they were become not alone without humanity, but without natural affection as well. 2. *The double reason.* (1) The advantageous character of the proposed transaction is exhibited by Judah, who doubtless understood the sort of arguments that would weigh most powerfully with his brethren. Simply to assassinate the hated stripling and conceal his blood might indeed gratify their feelings of revenge, but would not do much to enrich them. Might it not be possible to dispose of him more profitably than by the coarse way of killing him? Then (2) the humane aspect of the proposed transaction is pathetically dwelt upon by Judah,—"he is our brother and our flesh,"—in which perhaps may also be detected Judah's subtle knowledge of human nature, in reasoning that men who cared nothing for the claims of humanity and brotherhood in themselves might be induced to do a little cheap philanthropy by sparing Joseph, after they had first been made to see that it would likewise be profitable. Judah's last remark was a master-stroke which overbore every vestige of opposition: "his brethren were content." 3. *The favourable opportunity.* Many wicked schemes are happily never carried through because the opportunity is wanting—thanks to Divine providence! But, on the other hand, thousands of nefarious crimes are born of the opportunity—thanks to the sinful ingenuity of the fallen heart! The scheme of Judah was clearly suggested by the providential circumstance that at the moment an Ishmaelitish caravan was passing by on its way with gums and spicery to Egypt. That caravan was God's chariot sent to convey Joseph to the throne of Egypt. Judah asked his brethren to see in it a prison van to take their brother into slavery in Egypt. Wicked men and God may often seem to play at cross purposes with one another, but God always triumphs. Man proposes; God disposes. 4. *The accomplished transaction.* "They

drew and lifted Joseph up out of the pit, and sold him to the Midianites for thirty pieces of silver." The first recorded specimen of a transaction which has frequently been repeated in the history of mankind. Slave markets have often imitated, but seldom surpassed, the wickedness of which Joseph's brethren were guilty. It was not simply a fellow-creature that they sold, but a brother; and they had not even the poor apology of getting a good bargain, as they sold him for twenty shekels—little over forty shillings! 5. *The unforeseen result.* Joseph's purchasers conveyed him into Egypt, and sold him, as probably his brethren expected; it is scarcely likely they anticipated he would find his way into so honourable service as that of a high officer of state. But God was taking Joseph thereby a step nearer to his predicted elevation.

II. THE DOLEFUL TIDINGS. 1. *The ominous symbol.* The coat of ends, the token of a father's love for his darling son, the insensate ruffians, after dipping it in blood, caused to be conveyed into their father's presence by the hands of a swift-footed messenger. This was rather a proof of their cowardice than of their consideration for Jacob's feelings. 2. *The pretended discovery.* The bearer of the blood-stained tunic was directed to say that the brethren had found the robe, and to ask, with expressions of their deep concern, whether or not it was the coat of his beloved son. Their intention we cannot think was to stab their father's heart, but to mislead his judgment. 3. *The expected inference.* As they designed, the old man concluded that his son was devoured: "Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Seldom do villains' plots succeed so well.

III. THE SORROWING PARENT. 1. *The bitter grief.* The depth and tenderness of Jacob's mourning for his lost son was—(1) visibly expressed: "he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins;" (2) long continued: "he mourned for his son many days;" and, if we accept a proposed reading of the last clause of ver. 35, (3) lovingly shared: "his father," the blind Isaac, who still survived, "wept for him" —for Rachel's dead child and Jacob's lost son. 2. *The ineffectual consolation.* "All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted." For this Jacob was (1) to be excused, since his comforters were mostly hypocrites, whose proffered consolations must have sounded strangely hollow in his ears; but also (2) to be blamed, since although God in his providence had taken away Joseph, that was no reason why he should give way to despairing grief. Not so did Abraham when he thought of losing Isaac.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 28.—*Drawn from the pit.* "And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit." As a compromise Joseph had been thrown into a pit. His brothers at first intended to murder him. Their intention was almost as bad as a murder. The Scriptures tell us that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer." And one writer says, "Many a man who has not taken a brother's life, by indulgence of malevolence, is in the sight of God a more sinful man than many who have expiated their guilt on a scaffold." Joseph only was the gainer in that life was spared. To the brothers deep guilt appertained. They threw him into a pit to perish, thinking possibly to lessen guilt by avoiding the actual shedding of blood.

I. WE MUST EXPECT TO FIND PITFALLS IN LIFE. To Joseph the snare came suddenly. He was forced in. He had acted as he believed rightly in revealing the wicked deeds of his brethren, and he suffers for it. His brothers seize the first opportunity of bringing reprisals upon him for what they considered his officiousness. When alone they seized him. They were ten men to one stripling. Coward brothers! "In with him," they say. In the pit's depth is security, in its dryness speedy death. The pitfalls into which many stumble or into which they are drawn are such as these: circumstances being altogether unfavourable in life; or severe and overpowering temptations to some special sin, as intemperance, passion, or lust; or greed, or ambition, or spiritual pride. Debt, loss of character, and despondency are also deep pitfalls. If we come to love evil for itself, that is a very deep pit, and it adjoins that state which is hopeless. Many are drawn into these pits by

carelessness, indifference, and neglect, while others are so entangled by circumstances and conditions of birth that the wonder is that they ever escape.

II. There is often deliverance from the deepest pitfalls. To Joseph it came at the right moment. It came in response to earnest desire. The brothers thought to make a profit by his deliverance, but God was saving him through their avarice and timidity. Joseph was helpless. His brothers had to lift him out. We must feel our helplessness, and then Christ is sure to deliver us from the pit of sin and despair. The brothers of Joseph had low and mercenary aims in lifting up their brother; Jesus is all love and self-sacrifice in the effort to save us. Nothing but the long line of his finished work and fervent love could reach souls. When brought up from the pit we shall not be inclined to praise ourselves. We shall ascribe all the glory to him who "brought us up out of the deep pit and miry clay, and placed our feet upon a rock, and established our goings."—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass.** The present chapter appears to interrupt the continuity of the narrative of Joseph's history. Partly on this account, and partly because the name Jehovah occurs in it (vers. 7, 10), it has been pronounced a later Jehovistic interpolation (Tuch, Bleek, Davidson, Colenso). Its design has been explained as an attempt to glorify the line of David by representing it as sprung from Judah (Bohlen), or to disclose the origin of the Levirate law of marriage among the Jews (Knobel); but the incidents here recorded of Judah and his family are fitted to reflect dishonour instead of glory on the ancestry of David (Hävernick); and the custom here mentioned of raising up seed to a dead brother by marrying his widow, though the idea may have originated with Judah (Lange), is more likely to have descended from earlier times (Delitzsch, Keil). Rightly understood, the object of the present portion of the record appears to have been not simply to prepare the way for the subsequent (ch. xlvi. 8—27) genealogical register (Gerlach), or to contrast the wickedness of Judah and his sons with the piety and chastity of Joseph in Egypt (Wordsworth), or to recite the private history of one of Christ's ancestors (Bush, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or to show that the pre-eminence of Judah in the patriarchal family was due exclusively to grace (Candlish), but also and chiefly to justify the Divine procedure in the subsequent deportation of Jacob and his sons to Egypt (Keil). The special danger to which the theocratic family was exposed was that of intermarrying with the Canaanites (ch. xxiv. 3; xxviii. 6). Accordingly, having carried forward his narrative to the point where, in consequence of Joseph's sale, a way begins to open up for the transference of the patriarchal house to the land of the Pharaohs, the historian makes a pause to introduce a passage from the life of Judah, with the view of proving the necessity of such removal, by showing, as in the case of Judah, the almost certainty that, if left in Canaan, the descendants of Jacob would fall before the temptation of marrying with the daughters of the land, with the result, in the first instance, of a great and rapid moral deterioration in the holy seed, and with the ultimate effect of completely obliterating the line of demarcation between them and the surrounding heathen world. How the purity of the patriarchal family was guarded till it developed into a powerful nation, first by its providential withdrawment in infancy from the sphere of temptation (ch. xlvi. 5), then by its separate establishment in Goshen beside a people who regarded them with aversion (ch. xlvi. 34), and latterly by its cruel enslavement under Pharaoh (Exod. i. 10), is a subject which in due course engages the attention of the writer. **At that time.** (1) If the date of Judah's marriage, as is most probable, was shortly after the sale of Joseph (Keil, Kurtz, Lange, Alford, Wordsworth, Quarry), since at the time of that atrocity Judah was still living with his brethren, the only difficulty calling for solution is to account for the birth of Judah's grandchildren, Hezron and Hamul (the sons of Pharez, the twin child of Judah by Tamar), in the short interval of twenty-two years which preceded Jacob's descent into Egypt without making Er and Onan marry in comparative boyhood. The case becomes a little less perplexing if Hezron and Hamul, though said to have come into Egypt (ch. xlvi. 27; Exod. i. 1; Deut. x. 22), may be regarded as having been born there (Hengstenberg), since twenty-two years afford sufficient space for the birth of Judah's three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah, which may have taken place during the first three years after their father's marriage, and for the birth of Pharez and Zarah, even if Er married as late as eighteen. Of course if

the narrative requires the birth of Hezron and Hamul to have taken place in Canaan (Kalisch), it is simply impossible to hold that all this occurred within little more than a score of years. Hence (2) the date of Judah's marriage has been placed before the sale of Joseph (Augustine, Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller, Drechsler, Baumgarten, Gerlach, Ainsworth, Candlish, Murphy, Inglis); but even on this assumption the task is arduous to make the birth of Hezron and Hamul occur before the emigration of their great-grandfather to Egypt. For as Judah was not more than four years older than Joseph (cf. ch. xxix. 35 with xxx. 25), his age at the time of Joseph's sale could not have been more than twenty-one. But placing Judah's marriage at the earliest possible date, viz., in his fifteenth year, only substitutes an interval of twenty-eight years instead of one of twenty-two, in which Judah's son Er must be born, grow up to manhood, (say at fifteen) marry, die, and leave his widow Tamar, who, after marrying with Onan and waiting for Shelah (which would consume at least another year), must become the mother of twin sons by her father-in-law (for which another year would be required), and must see the elder of the two married at ten years of age, if his sons are to be born upon the soil of Canaan. On either hypothesis, therefore, it seems indispensable to hold that Judah's grandsons were born in Egypt; and in this case there is little gained by putting Judah's marriage earlier than Joseph's sale, *i. e.* in Judah's twenty-first year. **That Judah went down**—from Hebron (ch. xxxvii. 14), or the mountains (Keil), towards the south (Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller)—**from his brethren,**—setting up a separate and independent establishment apart from them; "not only immediately after Joseph was sold, but also on account of it," "in a fit of impenitent anger" (Kurtz), in a spirit of remorse (Lange)—**and turned in to a certain Adullamite,**—literally, *and pitched* (sc. his tent, ch. xxvi. 15) *up to*, as far as, or close by, a man, *an Adullamite*, i. e. belonging to Adullam, a town in the Hebron valley (Josh. xv. 35); in the time of the conquest the seat of a Canaanitish king (Josh. xii. 15), afterwards celebrated for its connection with the history of David (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2; 2 Sam. xxiii. 13), subsequently mentioned in Scripture (2 Chron. xi. 7; Neh. xi. 30; Micah i. 15), but never successfully identified (*vide* 'Land and the Book,' pp. 606, 607; Robinson, ii. 175)—**whose name was Hirah**—"Nobility" (Gesenius).

Ver. 2.—**And Judah saw there the daughter of a certain** (literally, *of a man, a*) **Canaanite,**—not of a merchant (Onkelos), but of an inhabitant of the land of Canaan—**whose name was Shuah;**—"Wealth," "Riches," "Cry for Help" (Gesenius). This was not the name of Judah's wife (LXX.), but of her father—(*vide* ver. 12)—**and he took her,**—*i. e.* married her (*vide* ch. vi. 2; xxiv. 67)—**and went in unto her.**

Ver. 3.—**And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er**—"Watcher" (Gesenius). What is commonly regarded as an idiosyncrasy of the Elohist, viz., the naming of a child by its father, here occurs in a so-called Jehovistic section.

Ver. 4.—**And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan**—"Strength" (Gesenius). The naming of a child by its mother a peculiarity of the so-called Jehovist; but *vide* ch. xvi. 15.

Ver. 5.—**And she yet again conceived** (lit., *and she added again*), **and bare a son; and called his name Shelah:**—"Prayer" (Gesenius), "Peace" (Fürst)—**and he** (*i. e.* Judah) **was**—*sc.* absent (Gerlach); or, translating impersonally, *it was*, i. e. the event happened (Murphy)—**at Chezib,**—probably the same as Achzib (Josh. xv. 44; Micah i. 14, 15) and Chezeba (1 Chron. iv. 22), which in the partitioning of the land fell to the sons of Shelah, and was here mentioned that Shelah's descendants might know the birth-place of their ancestor (Keil); or the fact of Judah's absence at the birth of his third son may be recorded as the reason of the name, "Peace," "Rest," "Prosperity," which the child received (Gerlach)—**when she bare him**—literally, *in her bearing of him.*

Ver. 6.—**And Judah took a wife** (cf. ch. xxi. 21; xxiv. 4) **for Er his firstborn,**—"by the early marriage of his sons Judah seems to have intended to prevent in them a germinating corruption" (Lange)—**whose name was Tamar**—"Palm tree" (Gesenius). Though the name was Shemitic, it does not follow that the person was. Cf. Melchisedeck and Abimelech. Yet she is not expressly called a Canaanite, though it is more than probable she was. Lange conjectures that she may have been of Philistine descent, and thinks the narrative intends to convey the impression that she was a woman of extraordinary character.

Ver. 7.—**And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord.** The connection between Er's name (עֵר) and Er's character (רַע) is noticeable. The special form which his wickedness assumed is not stated; but the accompanying phrase suggests that, as in the case of the Sodomites (ch. xiii. 13; xix. 5), it was some unnatural abomination. **And the Lord slew him**—literally, *caused him to die;* not necessarily by direct visitation; perhaps simply by allowing him to reap the fruits of his youthful indulgence in premature and childless death, which yet was so rapid and so evidently

entailed by his evil courses as immediately to suggest the punitive hand of God.

Ver. 8.—**And Judah said unto Onan** (obviously after a sufficient interval), **Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her,**—literally, *and perform the part of levir, or husband's brother, to her.* The language seems to imply that what was afterwards in the code Mosaic known as the *Lex Leviratus* (Deut. xxv. 5, 6) was at this time a recognised custom. The existence of the practice has been traced in different forms among Indians, Persians, and other nations of Asia and Africa—**and raise up seed to thy brother.** As afterwards explained in the Hebrew legislation, the first-born son of such a Levirate marriage became in the eye of the law the child of the deceased husband, and was regarded as his heir.

Vers. 9, 10.—**And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when**—literally, *and it was if,* i. e. whenever (cf. Ewald, 'Heb. Synt.,' § 345*b*)—**he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground** (literally, *destroyed to the ground*), **lest that he should** (or, so as not to) **give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased** (literally, *was evil in the eyes of*) **the Lord**:—the word Jehovah is employed not because the writer was a late interpolater, but because the sin of Onan was an offence against the sanctity and prosperity of the theocratic family (Hengstenberg)—**wherefore he** (*i. e.* Jehovah) **slew him also** (*vide supra*).

Ver. 11.—**Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow**—*almanah,* from *alam,* to be solitary, forsaken, signifies one bereft of a husband, hence a widow (cf. Exod. xxii. 21)—**at thy father's house** (cf. Levit. xxii. 13), **till Shelah my son be grown.** It is implied that this was merely a pretext on the part of Judah, and that he did not really intend to give his third son to Tamar, considering her an unlucky woman (Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch), or, at least, not at present, under the impression that the deaths of Er and Onan had been occasioned by their too early marriages (Lange). The reason of his failure to release Tamar from her widowhood is added in the ensuing clause. **For he said** (*sc.* in his heart), **Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.**

Ver. 12.—**And in process of time**—literally, *and the days were multiplied* (cf. ch. iv. 3), which is rendered by the same words in the A. V.—**the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted** (or, comforted himself, ceased to mourn), **and went up unto his sheep-shearers** (*vide* ch. xxxi. 19) **to Timnath,**—a border town between Ekron and Bethshemesh (Josh. xv. 10) in the plain of Judah (Kalisch, Wordsworth, W. L. Alexander in Kitto's 'Cyclopedia'); but more probably here a town (Josh. **xv.** 57) in the mountains of Judah (Robinson, ii. 343, Keil, Alford, 'Speaker's Commentary')—**he and his friend**—ὁ ποιμὴν αὐτοῦ (LXX.)—**Hirah the Adullamite.**

Ver. 13.—**And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father-in-law**—חָם, a father-in-law, from חָמָה, unused, to join together. Cf. γαμβρός for γαμερός, a son-in-law, or generally one connected by marriage, from γαμέω—**goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.**

Ver. 14.—**And she put her widow's garments off from her** (to prevent detection by Judah), **and covered her with a vail,**—to conceal her features, after the fashion of a courtesan (ver. 15; cf. Job xxiv. 15)—**and wrapped herself,**—possibly with some large mantle (Alford)—**and sat in an open place,**—literally, *in the opening* (i. e. gate) *of Enaim* (LXX., Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, *et alii*); less happily, in the opening of the eyes, *i. e.* in a public and open place (Calvin), in the parting of the ways, *in bivio itineris* (Vulgate), in the opening (or breaking forth) of the two fountains (Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller)—**which is by** (or upon) **the way to Timnath;**—"close to the site of Thamna, now Tibneh, three miles to the east, on an ancient road coming from Adullam, the very road by which the patriarch Judah would have come from Adullam to Timnah, is a ruin called Allin, or Anim, or Ainim" ('Palestine Exploration,' quoted by Inglis)—**for she saw that Shelah was grown** (he was probably not much younger than either of his brothers who had died), **and she was not given unto him to wife**—literally, *for a wife.*

Ver. 15.—**When** (literally, *and*) **Judah saw her, he** (literally, *and he*) **thought her to be an harlot;**—literally, *thought her* (i. e. took her for) *an harlot,* like λογίζεσθαί τινα εἴς τι (cf. 1 Sam. i. 13; Job xiii. 24), or זוֹנָה (fem. part. of זָנָה, to commit fornication); *vide* ch. xxxiv. 31—**because she had covered her face**—*more meretricis.*

Ver. 16.—**And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law).** Though willing to commit adultery or fornication, Judah would have shrank from the sin of incest. **And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?** The conduct of Tamar, though in every way reprehensible, is not to be attributed to mere lust, or inordinate desire for offspring, if not from the son Shelah, then from the father Judah, but was probably traceable to a secret wish on the one hand to be avenged on Judah, and on the other hand to assert her right to a place amongst the ancestresses of the patriarchal

family. Yet Tamar was really guilty of both adultery and incest, though Lange thinks the wickedness of Er and Onan renders this open to question.

Ver. 17.—**And he said, I will send** thee **a kid from the flock**—literally, *a kid of the goats* (ver. 20; cf. Judges xv. 1). **And she said, Wilt thou give** me **a pledge, till thou send** it?—literally, *if thou wilt give me a pledge* (עֵרָבוֹן, from עָרַב, to give in pledge, a word peculiar to traders which the Greeks and Romans appear to have borrowed from the Phenicians, the originators of traffic: cf. *ἀῤῥαβών, arrhabo:* vide Gesenius, p. 652) *until thy sending* (sc. then I consent to thy proposal).

Ver. 18.—**And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet,**—the *chotham*, or signet, was either worn on the finger, *δακτυλιον* (LXX.) or suspended round the neck by a *pithil*, or silk string. Its impression was a sign of property and a means of security (cf. Matt. xxvii. 66; John iii. 33; Ephes. i. 13, &c.). Among the ancient Babylonians it was customary for every one to wear such a ring (Herod., i. 195); and modern Arabians in towns wear a seal-ring on the finger, or fastened by a cord round the neck, the impression of which serves as a signature (Robinson, i. 52). The seals and signets that have been brought to light by the excavations in Assyria and Babylon (Layard, 'Nin. and Bab.,' 152—159, 602—608) are of various forms and materials. They show the art of engraving to have been of great antiquity; but whether Judah's signet was marked with alphabetical characters cannot be determined, though it may have been, since alphabetical writing was as old at least as the time of Abraham (*vide* Keil, 'Introd.,' Part I. sect. i. ch. i. § 4)—**and thy bracelets** (rather, thy chain, *pithil*, ut supra), **and thy staff** (the *mateh*, or rod, was so called from the idea of stretching out, the root being *natah*, to stretch out or extend) **that is in thine hand.** This too every Babylonian carried (Herod., i. 195). "It was necessarily adorned with some device carved upon it, and consisting in a flower or a fruit, a bird, or some other animal" (Kalisch). **And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.**

Ver. 19.—**And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.**

Ver. 20.—**And Judah sent the kid**—literally, *the kid of the goats*, which he had promised (ver. 17)—**by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand: but** (literally, *and*) **he** (*i. e.* Hirah) **found her not.**

Ver. 21.—**Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot,**—literally, *the consecrated*, the prostitute being regarded as "one devoted to the worship of Astarte, a goddess of the Canaanites, the deification of the generative and productive principle of nature," corresponding to the Babylonian Ashtarte, whose worship was of a grossly libidinous character (Herod., i. 199). Cf. Deut. xxiii. 19; Numb. xxv. 1; Hosea iv. 14; and *vide* Keil on Deut. xxiii. 19—**that was openly by the way side?**—or, that was in Enajim on the way, *ut supra*, ver. 14). **And they said, There was no harlot** (or *kedeshah*) **in this** place.

Ver. 22.—**And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said,** that **there was no harlot** (or *kedeshah*) **in this** place.

Ver. 23.—**And Judah said, Let her take** it **to her,**—literally, *let her take to herself* (sc. the pledge)—**lest we be shamed** (literally, *become a contempt*, i. e. by inquiring after her. Though not afraid to sin against God, Judah was pained at the idea of losing his reputation before men): **behold, I sent this kid** (*i. e.* I take you to witness that I have fulfilled my promise), **and thou hast not found her.**

Ver. 24.—**And it came to pass about three months after** (the usual time at which pregnancy is certainly determined), **that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot** (or, acted as a *zonah*); **and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said** (altogether unmindful of his own iniquity three months previous), **Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.** Under the law stoning was the punishment allotted to the crime of Tamar (Deut. xxii. 20—24), burning being added only in cases of excessive criminality (Levit. xx. 14; xxi. 9). It is obvious that the power of life and death lay in the hand of Judah, as the head of his family.

Ver. 25.—**When she** was **brought forth** (literally, *she was brought forth, and*), **she sent to her father-in-law** (who apparently had not the heart to witness the execution of his own sentence), **saying, By the man, whose these** are, am **I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose** are **these, the signet, and bracelets** (or chain), **and staff.**

Ver. 26.—**And Judah acknowledged** (or discerned, *ut supra*, i. e. recognised) them, **and said, She hath been more righteous than I;**—though Tamar was far from innocent (*vide* ver. 16), she was by no means as culpable as Judah—**because that** (כִּי־עַל־כֵּן, for, for this cause, *i. e.* that so it might happen to me: *vide* ch. xviii. 5) **I gave her not to Shelah my son. And** (in token of his penitence) **he knew her again no more.**

Ver. 27.—**And it came to pass in the time**

of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. Cf. the case of Rebekah (ch. xxv. 24).

Ver. 28.—**And it came to pass, when she travailed,**—literally, *in her bringing forth* (cf. ch. xxxv. 17)—**that the one put out his hand:**—literally, *and it* (sc. the child) *gave a hand,* i. e. it was an abnormal and dangerous presentation—**and the midwife** (*vide* ch. xxxv. 17) **took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.**

Ver. 29.—**And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she** (*i. e.* the midwife) **said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee:**—literally, *What a breach hast thou made!* upon thee, a breach! or, Why hast thou broken forth for thyself a breach (Delitzsch)? or, How hast thou made for thee a breach? (Murphy)—**therefore his name was called Pharez**—or Breach (cf. ch. xlvi. 12; Numb. xxvi. 20; 1 Chron. ii. 4; Matt. i. 3).

Ver. 30.—**And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah**—Splendour.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—30.—*The house of Judah: a family record of sin and shame.* I. The wickedness of Er and Onan. 1. *Early.* On any hypothesis Er and Onan can have been little more than boys when they were married, and yet they appear to have arrived at a remarkable precocity in sin. Nor was it simply that they had shed the innocence and purity of youth, but they had also acquired a shameful proficiency in vice. Young scholars are mostly apt learners, especially in the devil's school. 2. *Unnatural.* Though not described, the wickedness of Judah's first son had relation to some perversion of the ordinance of marriage; that of his second is plainly stated to have been uncleanness and self-pollution. Neither against nature nor contrary to grace are the endearments of the married state, but every act outside of the Divine permissions concerning woman is both. 3. *Heinous.* The act of Er is characterised as "wicked in the sight of the Lord," while that of Onan is said to have displeased the Lord. Hence it may be reasonably inferred that the essential criminality in both cases was the same. They were both perversions of a natural ordinance. They both militated against the purity and development of the theocratic family. Both indicated a contemptuous unbelief in the promise of the covenant, and a sacrilegious distegard for the calling of Israel as the progenitor of the promised seed. Hence both were deserving of Divine reprobation. 4. *Disastrous.* The tendency of all sin is ruinous, both for body, soul, and spirit. Whether as a natural result of indulgence in vice, or as a direct punitive visitation from God, Er and Onan were consigned to premature graves; and this, it should be noted by young persons of both sexes, is the almost inevitable consequence of indulgence in secret vice, and in particular of the practice of which Onan was guilty. Yielded to, it debilitates the physical constitution by a wasting of the vital powers, it impairs the mental faculties, it corrupts the moral nature, it sears and petrifies the conscience, and finally, what might have been a fair specimen of noble and virtuous manhood or womanhood it covers up, a poor, wasted, shivering skeleton, beneath the clods of the valley, causing it to lie down among the sins of its youth.

II. The sin of Tamar. The conduct of Judah's daughter-in-law, the young widow of Er and Onan, though not without its extenuations, in having been partly provoked by Judah's reluctance to marry her to Shelah, and partly inspired by a desire to take her place among the ancestresses of the promised seed, was yet in many respects reprehensible. 1. She discovered *impatience.* Although Judah did manifest a temporary unwillingness to give her Shelah for a husband, she might have reasoned that, after losing two sons, it was not unnatural that he should hesitate about exposing a third to the same risk of destruction. 2. She manifested *unbelief.* If Tamar did regard herself as wronged, as most undoubtedly she was, instead of taking measures to right herself, she should have left her cause to God, who had already vindicated her against the wickedness of her youthful husbands, and who in his own time and way would doubtless have interposed to assert her prerogative as a widow belonging to the family of Israel. 3. She practised *deception.* Laying aside her widow's garments, and assuming the attire of a harlot, she took her station at the gate of Enajim, on the way to Timnath, and pretended to be

a prostitute. Tamar manifestly was not a woman of refined and delicate sensibilities; but then she was a Canaanite, and had been the wife of Er and Onan, who were not calculated to improve her modesty. 4. She was guilty of *temptation.* It is true the narrative does not represent her as having been guilty of solicitation, like the "foolish woman" described by Solomon (Prov. vii. 6—23; ix. 14—18). Perhaps she knew that Judah would not require solicitation; but if so, she was all the more guilty in placing temptation in Judah's way. 5. She committed *incest.* The guilt of an incestuous connection which rested on Judah unconsciously she had knowingly and willingly taken on herself.

III. THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF JUDAH. More numerous, if not more heinous, than those of either his sons or his daughter-in-law were the offences of Judah. Jacob's fourth son sinned—1. *In marrying a Canaanitish wife.* Though Judah's marriage with Shuah's daughter was blessed by God, who made it fruitful, it does not follow that it was approved by God. 2. *In withholding Shelah from Tamar.* Although it does not appear as yet to have been commanded that in default of issue a widow should be married by her deceased husband's brother, it is obvious that Judah recognised that it should be so, both by his own act in giving Onan to Tamar after Er's death, and by his own subsequent confession with regard to Shelah (ver. 26). 3. *In deceiving Tamar.* Instead of frankly telling her that he did not intend his third son to become her husband, he bound her to remain a widow, and sent her home to her father's house (instead of keeping her in his own) under the impression that Shelah was only withheld from her on the score of youth. 4. *In committing sin with Tamar.* Though in reality Judah committed incest, yet so far as his intention went it was only adultery, or fornication. Yet all forms of unchastity are forbidden in the law of God. And it gives a very low conception of the morality of Judah that he, a member of the consecrated family of Israel, who had himself been married, should have so openly, and deliberately, and coolly turned aside to seek the company of a common strumpet, as he imagined Tamar to be. Judah should have acted on the principle afterwards stated by Paul (1 Cor. vii. 9). 5. *In condemning Tamar.* "Bring her forth, and let her be burnt," said the indignant patriarch. It is obvious the sentence was excessive in its severity. It was not imperative, else it could not have been remitted; and a recollection of his visit to Timnath three months previously should have inclined him to lean to mercy's side. But the virtuous Angelos of society always procure indulgence for themselves by damning their fellow-sinners (*Measure for Measure,* Act II.). Scripture counsels differently (Matt. vii. 3; Rom. ii. 22; Gal. vi. 1).

Vers. 12—26.—*Judah's sin with Tamar.* I. COMMITTED. 1. *Suddenly.* It was occasioned by the sight of a supposed courtesan. Much evil enters by the eye (cf. 2 Sam. xi. 2). Great need for the prayer of David (Ps. cxix. 37). 2. *Openly.* Judah was in the company of Hirah, his friend, when he beheld Tamar sitting in the gate of Enajim, and, without attempting to hide it from his friend, went to seek her society. Shamelessness in sin betokens great depravity. 3. *Wilfully.* Though in a manner surprised by the temptation, Judah was not inadvertently betrayed into commission of his sin with Tamar, but, on the contrary, went about it in a remarkably deliberate manner. 4. *Inexcusably.* There was no reason why Judah should not have sought a second wife to succeed Shuah's daughter, rather than consort with prostitutes.

II. DETECTED. 1. *Quickly.* No doubt Judah thought he had heard the last of his indiscretion on the way to Timnath; but lo! in three short months his guilt is discovered. Not every offender is so speedily arrested; but sooner or later detection is inevitable for all. "Be sure thy sin will find thee out." 2. *Unexpectedly.* Judah never imagined that his own signet, and chain, and staff would be produced as witnesses against him; and criminals never can be sure from what quarter testimony shall arise to condemn them. 3. *Completely.* There was no possibility of Judah's evading the charge of Tamar. By no sort of ingenuity could he repudiate the articles of dress with which probably his household were familiar. 4. *Publicly.* At the very moment when Tamar was produced for execution Judah was obliged to confess his guilt in presence of his assembled household; and in like manner will the wicked yet be openly convicted in the sight of an assembled world.

III. CONFESSED. 1. *Candidly*. Found out, Judah did not attempt either to deny or to palliate his guilt, but frankly acknowledged that Tamar's condition was due to him. 2. *Promptly*. Nor did he hesitate to own his guilt, but immediately confessed what he had done. 3. *Penitently*. This we may infer from the statement of the historian that the offence was not again repeated.

IV. FORGIVEN. It does not fall within the scope of the historian's design to indicate whether Judah obtained mercy; but this may be reasonably concluded from—1. *The promptness of his confession*. 2. *The sincerity of his penitence*. 3. *The reality of his faith*—as evinced by the fact that he was reckoned among the ancestors of our Lord.

Vers. 27—30.—*Tamar's twins*. I. POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE. (1) The offspring of the same parents; (2) the fruit of the same sin; (3) the gift of the same God.

II. POINTS OF DISTINCTION. (1) The order of their birth; (2) the import of their names; (3) the purpose of their lives—the first being an ancestor of the promised seed.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxxviii.—*The goodness and severity of God*. These occurrences in the family of Judah would seem (1) to betoken the *retributive judgment of God*, and (2) *illustrate his grace*. *Joseph* is lost, and still Divinely protected. *Judah* is a wanderer from his brethren, a sensual, self-willed, degenerate man; yet it is in the line of this same wanderer that the promised seed shall appear. The whole is a lesson on the evil of *separation from the people of God*. Luther asks why such things were placed in Scripture, and answers, (1) That no one should be *self-righteous*, and (2) that no one should *despair*, and (3) to remind us that *Gentiles by natural right* are brothers, mother, sisters to our Lord; the word of salvation is a word for the whole world.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Ver. 1.—**And Joseph was brought down to Egypt**. The narrative now preparing to recite the fortunes of Joseph in Egypt, which eventually led, through his elevation to be Pharaoh's prime minister, first to the salvation of the patriarchal family, and finally to their settlement in Goshen, the historian reverts, in accordance with his usual practice, to a point of time antecedent to the incidents contained in the preceding chapter, and makes a new departure in his story from the moment of Joseph's crossing into Egypt. **And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 36), **an Egyptian**,—literally, *a man of Mitzraim*. This implies that foreigners were sometimes employed to fill responsible offices about the Court of Pharaoh. The phrase "is not a superfluous addition, as the population of Heliopolis, from remote times, included a considerable admixture of Arabians" (Kalisch)—**bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 36), **which had brought him down thither**.

Ver. 2. —**And the Lord** — Jehovah, as usual, because the entire chapter is the work of the Jehovist (Tuch, Colenso), with the exception of a few alterations by the redactor (Davidson), or because, though the work of the Elohist, it has been modified by the Jehovistic editor (Bleek, Vaihinger); but more likely because the advancement of Joseph in Egypt was a special fruit of the theocratic promise which belonged to the patriarchal family (Hengstenberg, Quarry)—**was with Joseph** (cf. ver. 21; xxi. 20; xxvi. 24; xxviii. 15), **and he was a prosperous man** (literally, *a man prospering*); **and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian**—*i. e.* as a domestic servant.

Ver. 3.—**And his master saw that the Lord** (Jehovah) was **with him**—this does not imply that Potiphar was acquainted with Jehovah, but simply that he concluded Joseph to be under the Divine protection—**and that the Lord** (Jehovah) **made all that he did to prosper in his hand**. That which led to the conviction of Potiphar concerning Joseph was the remarkable success which he saw attending all his efforts and undertakings.

Ver. 4.—**And Joseph found grace in his sight**,—*vide* ch. vi. 8; xviii. 3; xix. 19; xxxix. 21. Most men are pleased with a good servant. Even Laban had no objections to Jacob so long as he divined that

Jehovah was multiplying his flocks for Jacob's sake (ch. xxx. 27)—**and he served him** (*i. e.* he waited on Potiphar, or acted as his personal attendant and comptroller of his household): **and he** (*i. e.* Potiphar) **made him overseer over his house,**—a position corresponding to that occupied by Eliezer in the household of Abraham (ch. xxiv. 2). Egyptian monuments attest the existence of such an officer in wealthy houses at an early period; a tomb at Kum-el-Ahmar exhibiting the account books, writing materials, and clerks that pertain to the office of a steward, and another at Beni-hassan, besides displaying his accustomed implements, styling him the Overseer (Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. p. 372, ed. 1878; Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 24). A sepulchral inscription belonging to the period of the eleventh dynasty also mentions among the officers comprising the household of Ameni the chancellor Athorsi, the barber Khentikhrati, the slave Gefahapi, the lady's maid Khui, the steward Ameni, the steward Santit (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. vi. p. 3). Joseph had also, after his exaltation, a ruler or steward of his house (cf. ch. xliii. 16, 19; xliv. 1)—**and all that he had he put into his hand**=literally, *and all which was to him he gave into his hand*, i. e. he intrusted to Joseph's care).

Ver. 5.—**And it came to pass from the time** that **he had made** (literally, *from that time he made*) **him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that** (literally, *and*) **the Lord** (Jehovah) **blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake** (cf. ch. xxx. 12); **and the blessing of the Lord** (Jehovah) **was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.** It is observable that throughout this chapter, when the historian is speaking in his own name the term Jehovah is used to designate the Supreme Being (cf. vers. 21, 23), whereas when Joseph replies to his mistress it is the word Elohim which he employs, the reason of which is sufficiently obvious.

Ver. 6—**And** (accordingly, encouraged by the admirable success attending Joseph's management) **he left all that he had in Joseph's hand** (*i. e.* gave him unrestricted control over all his temporal affairs); **and he knew not ought he had** (literally, *he knew not anything with him*, i. e. he shared not the care of anything along with him), **save the bread which he did eat.** This was necessitated by the laws of caste which then prevailed among the Egyptians, and in particular by the fact that "the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews" (ch. xliii. 32). **And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured**—literally, *beautiful in form and beautiful in appearance*, like his mother Rachel (ch. xxix. 17).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—23.—*Joseph in the house of Potiphar.* I. PURCHASED AS A SLAVE. 1. A *sad* lot. Worse even than being kidnapped by strangers, Joseph had been first sold by his brethren; carried into Egypt, he had there been exposed for sale in a slave-market; and now, as if he had been a beast of burden or a captive taken in war, he had been a second time purchased for money. Few fortunes are more touchingly sorrowful or more deeply humiliating than this which was now measured out to Jacob's youthful son. 2. A *common* lot. Happily in our land, and indeed wherever the gospel prevails, it is not a spectacle that can now be beheld—that of men trafficking in each other's flesh. But in those days the horrors of the auction block were not unfrequent sights, and Joseph, in being sold and bought like goods and chattels, was only experiencing a fate which had been undergone by many previous to his times, and has by myriads been suffered since. 3. An *appointed* lot. As everything on earth is, so was Joseph's sad and sorrowful estate assigned him by Heaven; and the recognition of this doubtless it was by Joseph that prevented him from murmuring, and apparently inspired him with a cheerful confidence, even in the darkest times.

II. EMPLOYED AS A SERVANT. 1. *Eminently prosperous.* (1) The extent of this prosperity. All that he did prospered. Everything he put his hand to appeared to thrive. Success seemed to wait upon him like his shadow. It is seldom such a measure of good fortune is meted out to any of God's people on the earth, or even of the devil's children. For the first they would probably be spoiled by such indulgence, while for the second they mostly fail in the conditions that are needful for such distinction. (2) The means of this prosperity. That Joseph was attentive, diligent, and conscientious in the performance of his household duties, as well as faithful and devoted to the interests of his master, may be reasonably inferred, since success seldom waits upon the negligent, the idle, or the unprincipled. (3) The

source of this prosperity. The historian is careful to note that the true mainspring of Joseph's, as of every other person's, prosperity was the Divine blessing on his labours. "The Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." 2. *Greatly rewarded*. Joseph was—(1) Noticed by his master. It is a pleasure to true and faithful servants when those they serve regard their work with favourable observation. (2) Accepted by his master. It says a great deal for Potiphar that he treated Joseph kindly, even though it was largely on account of his excellent qualities as a servant. (3) Promoted by his master. From being humble valet to the great man's person, he was exalted to the high position of steward or comptroller of the great man's house. (4) Trusted by his master. Everything connected with the management of Potiphar's establishment, in his mansion and on his farm, was unreservedly committed to the care of Joseph. Potiphar troubled himself about nothing "save the bread which he did eat."

III. Blessed as a man. 1. He enjoyed *Divine companionship* in his sad captivity. "The Lord was with him;" a compensation rich enough to be set against the miseries of bondage and exile, as God's people, when similarly situated, have not unfrequently experienced (cf. Acts xvi. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 17). 2. He obtained *Divine assistance* in his arduous duties. When the circumstances of Joseph's lot might have induced despondency, indifference, inaction, carelessness, and inattention, Divine grace so upheld and cheered him that he was able to go about his duties with alacrity and cheerfulness, so that everything he turned his hand to succeeded. 3. He received *Divine favour* in the eyes of his master. For Joseph himself to have secretly known that God approved of his person and behaviour would have been an ample consolation to his sad heart; but to obtain the good-will of Heaven so conspicuously that even his heathen master could not avoid observing it was surely a signal honour. 4. He attracted *Divine blessing* towards his fellow-men. "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake." Here was a clear experience by Joseph of the truth of the Abrahamic blessing (ch. xii. 2, 3). In this also Joseph was an eminent type of Christ.

Lessons:—1. Patience under suffering. 2. Contentment with one's lot. 3. Fidelity in service. 4. The secret of prosperity. 5. The obligations of masters towards servants. 6. The value of religion to a workman. 7. The profit of a pious servant.

Vers. 1—23.—*Sunshine and shadow*. I. The brightening sky. The advancement of Joseph in the house of Potiphar. 1. To Joseph's sense it was a lightening in his bondage. 2. To Joseph's faith it was the smiling of Jehovah's face. 3. To Joseph's hope it was the dawning of a better day.

II. The threatening cloud. The temptation of Joseph by his mistress. Here was—1. An assault upon his virtue, which, unless it were overcome, would deprive him of Jehovah's favour, and consequently put an end to any prospect he might have of deliverance; and, 2. An attack upon his safety, which, however it resulted, whether in his defeat or his victory, would likely terminate his enjoyment of his master's favour, if not altogether cost him his life.

III. The falling darkness. The accusation of Joseph by his mistress. 1. Though untrue, it was almost certain to be believed. 2. If believed, it would certainly involve him in punishment. 3. If deemed deserving of punishment, he would almost certainly be put to death.

IV. The starlight night. The history of Joseph in the prison. 1. He had not been executed, but only imprisoned. 2. God was with him in the dungeon, as he had been in the palace. 3. If the favour of his master had been lost, the confidence of his keeper had been gained. 4. Misfortune might seem to be always lying in wait for him, but, on the other hand, prosperity appeared to be ever following close upon his heels.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xxxix.—*The righteous man*. Again the word of the Lord tries Joseph, but not so much now as the word of prophecy, but as the word of command, the doctrine of righteousness. "The Egyptian's house is blessed for Joseph's sake."

"The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." A lesson on the true method of prosperity. A prosperous man is one who has the Lord with him—1. To give him favour with fellow-men. 2. To teach him wisdom, and put things into his hand. 3. To give him the faculty of rule, and dispose others to trust him entirely. 4. To keep him pure from the vicious besetments of the world, both by his own personal chastity and by his courage and self-command in hours of temptation. 5. By delivering him when he is entangled in the meshes of the evil-minded. The bad woman's determination is thwarted. Mercy is shown him in the prison. 6. By making him a messenger of peace and truth, even in the very prison-house of shame and misery.

Notice again the *elevation of Joseph's character*. 1. His *love of God*. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" 2. His *love of man*. "My master hath committed all to me"—how can I wrong him so? 3. His *confidence in the blessing of God* on the upright and holy life. He knew that God would vindicate him. 4. His *self-control*. His circumstances were fearful temptation. Had he not been a virtuous man in his heart of hearts, he would have succumbed, and then pleaded, as so many do, the power of the flesh and of the tempting circumstances.

Notice also how these *characteristics do help one another* when they are in the character, and how, when a man casts himself upon God, *God makes the way of escape*. Joseph was safer in prison than he was in his master's house.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 7.—**And it came to pass after these things,**—Joseph had by this time been nearly ten years in Potiphar's house (*vide* ch. xli. 46)—**that his master's wife cast her eyes** (lasciviously) **upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.** According to monumental evidence (Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. p. 392, ed. 1878; Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' i. 25; Kalisch, p. 631) and historical testimony (Herod., ii. 111), Egyptian females, even though married, were distinguished for licentiousness and immorality, and were not condemned to live in seclusion (Bohlen), but were allowed freely to mix in promiscuous society, which facts perfectly account for Joseph's temptation by his mistress.

Vers. 8, 9.—**But he refused,**—"it may be that the absence of personal charms facilitated Joseph's resistance (Kalisch); but Joseph assigns a different reason for his non-compliance with her utterly immoral proposition—**and said unto his master's wife,**—"for her unclean solicitation he returneth pure and wholesome words" (Hughes)—**Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house** (literally, *knoweth not, along with me, what is in the house*), **and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand,** (literally, *and all that is to him he hath given to or placed in my hand*); **there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin** (cf. ch. xx. 6; 2 Sam. xii. 13; Ps. li. 4 for the estimate of this act taken by God and good men) **against God?**—Elohim, since Jehovah would have been unintelligible to a heathen woman.

Ver. 10.—**And it came to pass, as she spake**—or, though she spake (Kalisch)—**to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her** (a euphemistic expression), or (which is not in the original, and may be omitted) **to be with her.**

Vers. 11, 12.—**And it came to pass about this time** (literally, *at this day*, i. e. it one day happened), **that Joseph went into the house to do his business** (*i. e.* to attend to his accustomed duties); **and there was none of the men of the house there within** (or, in the house). **And she caught him by his garment** (this was probably the long loose robe or mantle, with short sleeves, used in Oriental full dress), **saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out**—literally, *and went forth into the place without*, i. e. out of the house and into the street.

Vers. 13—15.—**And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand** (a very indiscreet act on the part of Joseph, considering the possible use that might be made of it), **and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in** (literally, *one has brought in*, the subject of the verb being indefinite) **an Hebrew** (literally, *a man, an Heberw*) **unto us to mock us** (the verb צָחַק, from which comes Isaac, is here used in a bad sense; not the same as in ch. xxvi. 8); **he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my**

voice and cried, that he left his garment with me (literally, *by my side*), **and fled, and got him out** (or, went forth into the street, *ut supra*).

Vers. 16—18.—**And she laid up his garment by her** (literally, *by her side*), **until his lord came home** (literally, *until the coming of his lord to his house*). **And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us** (here she charges her husband with being indirectly at least the cause of the alleged affront which had been put upon her), **came in unto me to mock me**:—"she seemed too modest to speak in plain terms of Joseph's crime (Lawson)—**and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me and fled out** (*i. e.* went forth into the street, *ut supra*).

Ver. 19.—**And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner** (literally, *according to these words*) **did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.** A papyrus consisting of nineteen pages of ten lines of hieratic writing (purchased from Madame D'Orbiney, and presently in the British Museum), belonging probably to the nineteenth dynasty, contains a tale of two brothers, in which incidents occur very similar to those here narrated. While the two are ploughing in the field, the elder sends the younger brother, who appears to have acted in the capacity of general superintendent, to fetch seed from the house. "And the younger brother found the wife of the elder sitting at her toilet." .... "And she spoke to him, saying, What strength there is in thee! indeed I observe thy vigour every day. Her heart knew him. . . . She seized upon him, and said to him, Come, let us lie down for an instant. Better for thee . . . beautiful clothes." "The youth became like a panther with fury on account of the shameful discourse which she had addressed to him. And she was alarmed exceedingly." . . . "Her husband returned home at evening, according to his daily wont. He came to the house, and he found his wife lying as if murdered by a ruffian." Inquiring the reason of her distress, he is answered as Potiphar was answered by his deceitful spouse. "And the elder brother became like a panther; . . . he made his dagger sharp, and took it in his hand" (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. ii. p. 139).

Ver. 20.—**And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison,**—literally, *house of enclosure; sohar*, from *sahar*, to encircle, meaning probably a turreted, arched, or rounded building for the confinement of prisoners—**a place where the king's prisoners** (*i. e.* State offenders) **were bound: and he was there in the prison.** This, which some regard as having been a mild punishment (Delitzsch, Keil), since, according to Diodorus Siculus, the laws of the Egyptians were specially severe in their penalties for offences against women, is represented by a Hebrew psalmist (Ps. cv. 18) as having been accompanied with bodily tortures, at least for a time; for his speedy elevation to a place of trust within the prison almost gives countenance to the idea (Kurtz, Lange, &c.) that Potiphar did not believe his wife's story, and only incarcerated Joseph for the sake of appearances. That Joseph was not immediately punished with death is not improbable (Bohlen), but exceedingly natural, since Joseph was Potiphar's favourite (Hävernick).

Ver. 21.—**But** (even if Joseph was harshly treated in the tower of Heliopolis) **the Lord**—Jehovah (*vide* on ver. 5)—**was with Joseph** (*vide* ver. 2), **and shewed him mercy** (literally, *extended kindness unto him*), **and gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper** (or captain) **of the prison** (or round house).

Vers. 22, 23.—**And the keeper of the prison** (captain of the round house, or chief officer of the tower) **committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it**—literally, *and all that they* (the prisoners) *were doing there, he was the person doing it, or attending to it*; i. e. the keeper gave him charge to see that the prisoners obeyed whatever orders were issued for their regulation; and, having implicit confidence in Joseph's probity, **the keeper of the prison looked not to anything** that was **under** (or in) **his hand** (*i. e.* he did not trouble himself about anything intrusted to Joseph); **because the Lord** (Jehovah) **was with him, and that which he did, the Lord** (Jehovah) **made it to prosper.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 7—23.—*Joseph and the wife of Potiphar.* I. THE GREAT TEMPTATION. 1. The *time* of it. Never perhaps had Joseph's prospects been brighter since he left his father's house than towards the close of that decade of years which he spent in the Egyptian officer's employ; and yet then it was that, like a thunderbolt shot from a clear sky, a fierce temptation burst upon him. 2. The *occasion* of it. This was the beauty of Joseph's person. Things innocent and lovely in themselves may sometimes

be a source of danger, and, if not guarded against, a cause of sin, to their possessors. In particular the good looks of men and women are often snares to others as well as fraught with peril to themselves, as the cases of Sarah (ch. xii. 14), Rebekah (ch. xxvi. 10), and Dinah (ch. xxxiv. 2) testify. Hence beauty of the person should neither be too eagerly coveted nor too proudly worn by either sex, as by each its charms in the other should be moderately admired, and its allurements earnestly resisted. 3. The *form* of it. The special trial to which the young man Joseph was now subjected partook of the character of an assault upon his chastity. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that a good man is always assaulted at the point where he is weakest. On the contrary, it is one of the devil's blunders that, in directing his attacks against saints, he for the most part mistakenly selects the point where they are strongest. Joseph was permitted to be assailed by his lascivious mistress not because his own personal virtue was doubtful, but because in that direction he was best prepared to repel the fiercest onset of temptation. 4. The *strength* of it. There were elements in this assault upon Joseph's virtue which were calculated to impart to it a vehemence that in ordinary circumstances, *i. e.* with persons of less robustness of moral principle than Joseph, must have proved overwhelming. These were—(1) The person by whom it was directed, viz., Joseph's mistress, the wife of a high officer of state, whose smile might have turned the head and intoxicated the heart of a young man who was only her slave. (2) The vehement importunity with which it was urged, his mistress speaking to him day by day, and even by act as well as word endeavouring to prevail. (3) The convenient opportunity which was almost always presented, seeing that Joseph's master was mostly absent, and the domestics often out of the way. (4) The danger he might incur by offending one so high in rank as his master's wife. (5) The advantages he might expect to reap from complying with her pleasure.

II. THE SPLENDID VICTORY. 1. The *manner* of Joseph's refusal. (1) Promptly, without the slightest hesitation or appearance of dallying with the tempting bait. Had Joseph hesitated, he might have been lost; had he trifled with the forbidden fruit, he might have plucked and ate. (2) Firmly. There was no sound of wavering or indecision about the reply of Joseph. It was not the answer of a man who was only half-hearted in putting away from him a thing which he secretly desired. In Joseph's "no" there was the clear, full-toned ring of a man who had made up his mind intelligently and finally. (3) Kindly. Joseph behaved towards his mistress with as much tenderness as his moral indignation and disgust at her behaviour would allow; his considerateness shining out conspicuously in this, that he studiously endeavoured to be as much as possible out of the unhappy woman's sight, in the hope, doubtless, that her unholy passion might abate. (4) Bravely. Joseph was prepared to run any risk rather than accede to the base proposal of his mistress, as was proved by his fleeing from the house without his doublet, when the impudent woman sought by catching hold of him to secure compliance with her request. 2. The *reason* of Joseph's refusal. (1) The greatness of the trust reposed in him by his master. Potiphar had committed everything to his (Joseph's) care; and how then could he repay with treachery so abominable a confidence so great? (2) The extent of the power delegated to him. Potiphar had kept back nothing from him except his wife; how then, having privileges so extensive, should he covet the one thing forbidden? (3) The sacredness of the relationship existing between his mistress and Potiphar. "Thou art his wife;" and by the covenant of marriage thou belongest to him only, and not to me. (4) The heinousness of the sin of which he would be guilty. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

III. THE REMARKABLE REWARD. 1. *The slander of his mistress.* The disappointed strumpet, thirsting for revenge, resolves upon accomplishing the ruin of the fair youth of whom the moment before she affected to be enamoured. But indeed all illicit passion, whether gratified or baulked, has a tendency sooner or later to become transformed into hate. Laying up the garment which Joseph had indiscreetly dropped in his haste, she makes use of it to trump up a charge against Joseph of having attempted a violation of her chastity. There is no length to which the fierce resentment of a wicked woman will not proceed against those who have incurred her hate. It will commonly go hard with her if out of a straw her infernal ingenuity cannot

manufacture a rope wherewith to strangle her victim. 2. *The wrath of his master* Potiphar, as was natural, at first felt inclined to believe his wife and to suppose that Joseph had foully betrayed the trust reposed in his honour. In this, of course, he acted hastily, and therefore sinfully. Even from the nearest and the dearest reports affecting injuriously the characters of others should not be accepted without investigation. But that second thoughts prevailed with Potiphar, who, remembering the bad reputation of Egyptian ladies generally, and knowing something possibly of the slenderness of his own wife's virtue, as well as recalling the previous high character of Joseph, began to doubt the truth of what was alleged against his favourite, and to think it more likely that his wife lied than that Joseph sinned, has been inferred from the circumstance that Joseph was not forthwith remitted to the executioner's block, but only committed to the tower. 3. *The mercy of his God.* As before, Jehovah went with Joseph to the prison, and comforted him with gracious thoughts concerning his affliction, with speedy favour in the sight of his keeper, so that the severity of his confinement was considerably mitigated, and with ultimate promotion to a position of trust within the prison, the charge of all the criminals being committed to his care. And finally, the Lord made him prosperous and successful as before in all his undertakings.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 21.—*Joseph in slavery.* "But the Lord was with Joseph," &c. Men would have thought, as they looked on the Hebrew slave, that he was God-forsaken. Not so. God blessed him. This was evidenced in the character he developed. The Lord was with him.

I. Discretion, the result of a sense of the Divine presence. He did not betray trust, or presume on the confidence placed in him, or the kind treatment he received; nor did he unwisely run into danger.

II. Diligence, the outcome of a sense of the Divine presence. Toil kept off much temptation. If a slave by circumstances, he will yet do what he can to benefit his master. He worked under apparently hopeless conditions.

III. Devoutness, the certain consequence of a sense of the Divine presence. Joseph lived as under the eye of God. Hence when special temptations came he repelled them in the Divine strength. "How can I do this great wickedness?" &c. Joseph was neither to be persecuted out of his religion nor enticed from it. This is the brightest chapter in Joseph's life. He would not sin against himself, nor against God, who was with him.—H.

Ver. 21.—*God's presence with his servants.* Joseph in slavery, yet the Lord was with him (cf. Rev. i. 9). Twice stated in this chapter. Outward prosperity is no test of God's presence (cf. Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 9). Often in times of trial God's presence is most clearly felt. When all dark below, the eye is drawn upwards. The world's good seen to be unprofitable (James iv. 4). There is a sense in which God is always with all. He guides men's actions and course of life, whether they will or not. But while unbelief derives no comfort from this (Zeph. i. 12), the knowledge of his presence gives peace to his people (Isa. xxvi. 3—12).

I. Character of him with whom God was thus present. A Godward mind—habitually living as in the sight of God, though left alone (cf. Gal. iv. 28). Fulfilled what his hand found to do. God's will was his rule of life. He resisted temptation (James i. 12); was faithful in the charge committed to him, though not of his own choice. Did not look upon the wrong he had suffered as excusing him from fidelity. This faithful spirit can spring only from thorough belief in God's love and care (1 John iv. 19).

II. The blessing of God's presence extended to every part of his life. Not merely in the fact of his being carried to Egypt (cf. Acts xxiii. 11), but in every incident God's hand is seen. His management of Potiphar's affairs was a training for rule over Egypt. His unjust accusation was a step towards his standing before Pharaoh. His experience in prison prepared him to be the deliverer of a nation (cf. Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15). Thus God's presence is something better and higher than

merely a prosperous course. It is the certainty that everything that happens is ordered by infinite wisdom and love—is a step towards the fulness of joy (Deut. viii. 2). This holds good in spiritual experience not less than in temporal. A Christian is often led through times of darkness. Communion with God seems to be interrupted (Ps. lxv. 3; Rom. vii. 24). Temptation, opposition, difficulty in prayer make the soul sad. Yet the Lord is not absent; and these are all parts of the training by which he is preparing his servant for the fulness of blessing.

III. HE WITH WHOM THE LORD ABIDES (John xiv. 23; Rev. iii. 20) IS A BLESSING TO OTHERS. So it was with Joseph. Potiphar, the jailer, Pharaoh, the Egyptian nation, were blessed through him. There is no such thing as keeping a blessing to ourselves; the very attempt destroys it as a blessing. Temporal possessions and powers, used selfishly, become vanity. They pass away, and leave no good, no joy behind. And so with spiritual good. He who has experienced the grace of God must care for others, or his own state will suffer (Prov. xi. 24). The more we partake of the mind of Christ, the more we learn that wherever he leads us, it is that we may be channels of blessing to others.—M.

Ver. 22.—*Joseph as prison warder.* "And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hands all the prisoners that were in the prison," &c. Joseph is unjustly treated and thrown into prison. Here he makes the best of circumstances. He gains the confidence of the keeper. The keeper of the State prison is glad to find one like Joseph, to whom he can delegate much toil and responsibility.

I. DUTY DISCHARGED IN A SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT. He admits many to prison, and feels for all. He sees that it is but a step from the presence-chamber of Pharaoh to a vile prison. To those who found higher places slippery, and those who found the temptations of poverty too strong, he shows his pity. His own bitter separation from friends makes him sympathetic.

II. DUTY DISCHARGED IN A CHEERFUL SPIRIT. Generally he had a smile for the prisoners. They looked for it, and responded to it. The heart can give to the sad that which is better than gold—a cheerful helpfulness. Our gloom can lay extra burdens on others.

III. DUTY DISCHARGED IN A COURTEOUS SPIRIT. He would not trample on those already fallen. He inquires even into the cause of the sadness of the prisoners, and interprets for them dreams which had perplexed them. His own dreams had made him at one time elate, but they seem as yet far from being fulfilled. Still this only leads him to be more courteous to those who may also be doomed to disappointment. The sympathy, cheerfulness, and courtesy of Joseph made him eventually prime minister of Egypt.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XL.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass** (literally, *and it was*) **after these things** (literally, *words*, i. e. after the transactions just recorded), that **the butler**—מַשְׁקֶה, the hiph. part. of שָׁקָה, to drink, signifies one who causes to drink, hence cupbearer (cf. ver. 11)—**of the king of Egypt and his baker**—the אֹפֶה (part. of אָפָה, to cook or bake) was the officer who prepared the king's food. The monuments show that the Egyptians had carried the arts of the confectioner and cook to a high degree of perfection (*vide* Hengstenberg, 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 27; Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' ii. 33—39, ed. 1878)—**had offended** (or **sinned against**) **their lord** (literally, *against*, the preposition being repeated) **the king of Egypt**—whom they had attempted to poison (the Targum of Jonathan), though this of course is only a conjecture in the absence of specific information.

Ver. 2.—**And Pharaoh was wroth**—literally, *broke forth* (sc. into anger)—**against two of his officers** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 36), **against the chief**—*sar:* the word occurs in one of the oldest historical documents of ancient Egypt ('Inscription of Una,' line 4, sixth dynasty), meaning chief or eunuch (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' ii. 3)—**of the butlers**,—an office once filled by Nehemiah in the Court of Persia (Neh. i. 11), and Rabshakeh (Aramaic for "chief of the cupbearers") in the Court of Assyria (2 Kings xviii. 17)—**and against the chief of the bakers.** Oriental monarchs generally had a multitude of

butlers and bakers, or cupbearers and Court purveyors, the chiefs in both departments being invested with high honour, and regarded with much trust (Herod., iii. 34; Xenoph., 'Cyrop.,' i. 3, 8).

Ver. 3.—**And he put them in ward** (or in custody) **in the house of the captain of the guard,**—*i. e.* Potiphar (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 36)—**into the prison,**—literally, *house of enclosure* (*vide* ch. xxxix. 20)—**the place where Joseph was bound.** The word אֵסוּר, from אָסַר, to make fast by binding, seems to corroborate the Psalmist's assertion (Ps. cv. 18) that Joseph had been laid in iron and his feet hurt with fetters; but this could only have been temporarily (*vide* vers. 4, 6).

Ver. 4.—**And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them** (literally, *set Joseph with them*, i. e. as a companion or servant; to wait upon them, since they were high officers of State, not to keep watch over them as criminals), **and he served them** (*i. e.* acted as their attendant): **and they continued a season in ward** (literally, *and they were days*, i. e. an indefinite period, *in prison*).

Ver. 5.—**And they dreamed a dream both of them** (on dreams cf. ch. xx. 3), **each man his dream in one night** (this was the first remarkable circumstance connected with these dreams—they both happened the same night), **each man according to the interpretation of his dream** (*i. e.* each dream corresponded exactly, as the event proved, to the interpretation put on it by Joseph, which was a second remarkable circumstance, inasmuch as it showed the dreams to be no vague hallucinations of the mind, but Divinely-sent foreshadowings of the future fortunes of the dreamers), **the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.**

Vers. 6, 7.—**And Joseph came in unto them in the morning** (a proof that Joseph at this time enjoyed comparative freedom from corporeal restraint in the prison), **and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.** The word זֹעֲפִים from זָעַף, to be angry, originally signifying irate, wrathful, *τεταραγμένοι* (LXX.), is obviously intended rather to convey the idea of dejection, *tristes* (Vulgate). **And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?**—literally, *knowing what* (מַדּוּעַ = מָה יָדוּעַ = *τί μαθών*) *are your faces evil, or bad* (*πρόσωπα σκυθρωπά*, LXX.; *tristior solito*, Vulgate), *to-day?*

Ver. 8.—**And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it**—literally, *a dream have we dreamt, and interpreting it there is none.* This must be noted as a third peculiarity connected with these dreams, that both of their recipients were similarly affected by them, though there was much in the butler's dream to inspire hope rather than dejection. **And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God?**—literally, *Are not interpretations to Elohim?* i. e. the Supreme Being (cf. ch. xli. 16; Dan. ii. 11, 28, 47). The Egyptians believed *ὅτι ἀνθρώπων μὲν οὐδενὶ προσκέεται ἡ τέχνη μαντική, τῶν δὲ θεῶν μετεξετέροισι* (Herod., ii. 83). **Tell me them, I pray you.** Joseph's request implies that the consciousness of his Divine calling to be a prophet had begun to dawn upon him, and that he was now speaking from an inward conviction, doubtless produced within his mind by Elohim, that he could unfold the true significance of the dreams.

Vers. 9—11.—**And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me**—literally, *in my dream* (sc. I was), *and behold a vine* (*gephen*, from the unused root *gaphan*, to be bent, a twig, hence a plant which has twigs, especially a vine; cf. Judges ix. 13; Isa. vii. 43; xxiv. 7) *before me.* The introduction of the vine into the narrative, which has been pronounced (Bohlen) an important factor in proof of its recent composition, since, according to Herodotus (ii. 77), the vine was not cultivated in Egypt, and, according to Plutarch ('De Is. et Osir.,' 6), it was not till after Psammetichus, *i. e.* about the time of Josiah, that the Egyptians began to drink wine, has now by more accurate study been ascertained to be in exact accordance, not only with Biblical statements (Numb. xx. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 47; cv. 33), but likewise with the testimony of Herodotus, who affirms (ii. 37) that wine (*οἶνος ἀμπέλινος*) was a privilege of the priestly order, and with the representations on the monuments of vines and grapes, and of the entire process of wine-making (*vide* Hävernick's 'Introduction,' § 21; Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' i. 379, *et seqq.* 430, 431, ed. 1878; Hengstenberg, 'Egypt,' p. 13; Rawlinson, 'Hist. Illus.,' p. 49; Thornley Smith, 'Joseph and his Times,' p. 58). **And in the vine were three branches**:—*sarigim*, tendrils of a vine, from *sarag*, to intertwine (ver. 12; Joel i. 7)—**and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth**;—literally, *as it budded* (Murphy); or, as though blossoming (Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch); it shot forth its blossom (Keil); or, its blossoms shot forth (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Murphy)—**and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes**:—more correctly, its stems caused to ripen, or matured, clusters, the אֶשְׁכֹּל being the stalk of a cluster, as distinguished from the עֲנָבִים, or clusters themselves (Gesenius, 'Lex.,' p. 85), though inter-

preters generally (Kalisch, Keil, Murphy) regard the first as the unripe, and the second as the ripe, cluster—**and Pharaoh's cup**—כּוֹס, a receptacle or vessel, either contracted from כְּנָס, like אִישׁ for אֱנָשׁ (Gesenius), or derived from כּוּס, to conceal, to receive, to keep, connected with the idea of bringing together, collecting into a thing (Fürst)—**was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them**—ἐξέθλιψα (LXX.), *expressi* (Vulgate), a translation adopted by the most competent authorities (Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*), though the sense of diluting with water is advocated by Dathe, Hävernick ('Introd.,' § 21), and others as the most appropriate signification of שָׂחַט, which occurs only here. That Pharaoh is represented as drinking the expressed juice of grapes is no proof that the Egyptians were not acquainted with fermentation, and did not drink fermented liquors. In numerous frescoes the process of fermentation is distinctly represented, and Herodotus testifies that though the use of grape wine was comparatively limited, the common people drank a wine made from barley: *οἴνῳ δ' ἐκ κριθέων πεποιημένῳ* (ii. 77)—**into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand**—literally, *I placed the cup upon Pharaoh's palm*, כַּף, used of Jacob's thigh-socket (ch. xxxii. 26), meaning something hollowed out.

Vers. 12—15.—**And Joseph** (acting no doubt under a Divine impulse) **said unto him, This is the interpretation of it** (cf. ver. 18; xli. 12, 25; Judges vii. 14; Dan. ii. 36; iv. 19): **The three branches** (*vide supra*, ver. 10) **are three days**:—literally, *three days these* (cf. ch. xli. 26)—**yet within three days** (literally, *in yet three days*, i. e. within three more days, before the third day is over) **shall Pharaoh lift up thine head**,—not *μνησθήσεται τῆς ἀρχῆς σου* (LXX.), *recordabitur ministerii tui* (Vulgate), a rendering which has the sanction of Onkelos, Samaritan, Jarchi, Rosenmüller, and others; but shall promote thee from the depths of thy humiliation (Gesenius, Fürst, Keil, Kalisch, &c.), to which there is an assonance, and upon which there is an intentional play, in the opposite phrase employed to depict the fortunes of the baker (*vide infra*, ver. 19)—**and restore thee unto thy place**:—epexegetic of the preceding clause, the כֵּן (or pedestal, from כּוּן, unused, to stand upright, or stand fast as a base) upon which the butler was to be set being his former dignity and office, as is next explained—**and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.** After which Joseph adds a request for himself. **But think on me when it shall be well with thee** (literally, *but, or only, thou shalt remember me with thee, according as, or when, it goes well with thee*), **and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me** (cf. Josh. ii. 12; 1 Sam. xx. 14, 15; 2 Sam. ix. 1; 1 Kings ii. 7), **and make mention of me unto Pharaoh**,—literally, *bring me to remembrance before Pharaoh* (cf. 1 Kings xvii. 18; Jer. iv. 16; Ezek. xxi. 28)—**and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen** (literally, *for stolen I was stolen*, i. e. I was furtively abducted, without my knowledge or consent, and did not voluntarily abscond in consequence of having perpetrated any crime) **away out** (literally, *from*) **of the land of the Hebrews**:—*i. e.* the land where the Ibrim live (Keil); an expression which Joseph never could have used, since the Hebrews were strangers and sojourners in the land, and had no settled possession in it, and therefore a certain index of the lateness of the composition of this portion of the narrative (Bleek, 'Introd.,' § 80); but if Abram, nearly two centuries earlier, was recognised as a Hebrew (ch. xiv. 13), and if Potiphar's wife could, in speaking to her Egyptian husband and domestics, describe Joseph as an Hebrew (ch. xxxix. 14, 17), there does not appear sufficient reason why Joseph should not be able to characterise his country as the land of the Hebrews. The Hebrews had through Abraham become known at least to Pharaoh and his Court as belonging to the land of Canaan (ch. xii. 15—20); and it is not a violent supposition that in Joseph's time "the land of the Hebrews" was a phrase quite intelligible to an Egyptian, as signifying not perhaps the entire extent of Palestine, but the region round about Hebron and Mamre (Nachmanides, Clericus, Rosenmüller)—scarcely as suggesting that the Hebrews had possession of the land prior to the Canaanites (Murphy). **And here also have I done nothing** (*i. e.* committed no crime) **that they should** (literally, *that they have*) **put me into the dungeon.** The term בּוֹר is here used to describe Joseph's place of confinement, because pits or cisterns or cess-pools, when empty, were frequently employed in primitive times for the incarceration of offenders (cf. Jer. xxxviii. 6; Zech. ix. 11).

Vers. 16, 17.—**When** (literally, *and*) **the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he** (literally, *and he*, encouraged by the good fortune predicted to his fellow-prisoner) **said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three** (literally, *and behold three*) **white baskets**—literally, *baskets of white bread;* LXX., *κανᾶ χονδριτῶν*; Vulgate, *canistra farinæ;* Aquila, *κόφινοι γύρεως* (Onkelos, Pererius, Gesenius, Fürst, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, *et alii*); though the rendering "baskets of holes," *i. e.* wicker baskets, is preferred by some (Symmachus,

Dathius, Rosenmüller, and others), and accords with the evidence of the monuments, which frequently exhibit baskets of wicker-work (*vide* Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' ii. 34, ed. 1878)—**on my head.** According to Herodotus (ii. 35), Egyptian men commonly carried on their heads, and Egyptian women, like Hagar (ch. xxi. 14), on their shoulders. **And in the uppermost basket** (whose contents alone are described, since it alone was exposed to the depredations of the birds) there was **of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh**—literally, *all kinds of food for Pharaoh, the work of a baker.* The monuments show that the variety of confectionery used in Egypt was exceedingly extensive (Hengstenberg, p. 27). **And the birds**—literally, *the bird;* a collective sing., as in ch. i. 21, 30 (cf. ver. 19)—**did eat them out of the basket upon my head.**

Vers. 18, 19.—**And Joseph answered and said** (with what reluctance and pathos may be imagined), **This is the interpretation thereof** (the exposition was supplied by God, and, however willing or anxious Joseph might be to soften its meaning to his auditor, he could not deviate a hair's-breadth from what he knew to be the mind of God): **The three baskets are three days: yet within three days**—literally, *in three days more* (ut supra, ver. 13)—**shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee** (*i. e.* deprive thee of life, the phrase containing a resemblance to that employed in ver. 13, and finding its explanation in the words that follow), **and shall hang thee on a tree**—*i. e.* after decapitation (cf. Deut. xxi. 22, 23; Josh. x. 26; 2 Sam. iv. 12), which was probably the mode of execution at that time practised in Egypt (Michaelis, Clarke, Keil, Murphy, Alford, Inglis, Bush), though some regard the clause as a description of the way in which the baker's life was to be taken from him, viz., either by crucifixion (Onkelos, Rosenmüller, Ainsworth) or by hanging (Willet, Patrick, T. Lewis), and others view it as simply pointing to capital punishment, without indicating the instrument or method (Piscator, Lapide, Mercerus, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.** "The terror of approaching death would be aggravated to the poor man by the prospect of the indignity with which his body was to be treated" (Lawson).

Ver. 20.—**And it came to pass** (literally, *and it was,* as Joseph had predicted) **the third day** (literally, *in, or on, the third day*), which was **Pharaoh's birthday,**—literally, *the day of Pharaoh's being born,* the inf. hophal being construed with an accusative (*vide* Gesenius, 'Grammar,' § 143)—**that he made a feast**—a *mishteh,* i. e. a drinking or banquet (*vide* ch. xix. 3)—**unto all his servants.** "The birthdays of the kings of Egypt were considered holy, and were celebrated with great joy and rejoicing. All business was suspended, and the people generally took part in the festivities" (Thornley Smith, 'Joseph and his Times,' p. 62; *vide* Herod., i. 133: Ἡμέρην δὲ ἀπασέων μάλιστα ἐκείνην τιμᾶν νομίζουσι, τῇ ἕκαστος ἐγένετο; and cf. Matt. xiv. 6; Mark vi. 21). **And he lifted up the head**—here the one phrase applies equally, though in different senses, to both. A similar expression occurs in the annals of Assur-nasir-pal (Sardanapalus), column ii. line 43: "Their heads on the high places of the mountain I lifted up" ('Records of the Past,' vol. iii. p. 54)—**of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants**—literally, *in their midst,* as a public example.

Vers. 21, 22.—**And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand** (literally, *set the cup upon Pharaoh's palm*): **but he** (*i. e.* Pharaoh) **hanged the chief baker** (*vide supra,* ver. 19): **as Joseph had interpreted to them.**

Ver. 23.—**Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph** (as Joseph had desired, and as he doubtless had promised), **but forgat him**—as Joseph might almost have expected (cf. Eccles. ix. 15, 16).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—23.—*Joseph in the round house at Heliopolis.* I. THE PRISONERS AND THEIR ATTENDANT. 1. *The prisoners.* (1) Their rank. They were high officers of state—the chief of the butlers and the chief of the bakers, *i. e.* the principal cup-bearer and Court purveyor. (2) Their offence. They had sinned against their lord the king of Egypt; in what way it is of no importance to inquire, since "we would have heard nothing about them had their story not been connected with that of Joseph" (Lawson), though the Rabbis allege that they had been detected in an attempt at poisoning their master. (3) Their punishment. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion," and "as messengers of death" (Prov. xix. 12; xvi. 14); and the two offenders were immediately arrested and thrown into prison, committed to the keeping of the captain of the round house, where Joseph was bound. (4) Their privilege. Their punishment was tempered with clemency. In consideration of

their official rank, the governor of the tower appointed Joseph to wait upon them and act as their servant. 2. *Their attendant.* In this new capacity Joseph behaved himself wisely and with discretion. With regard to his illustrious companions in misfortune, he—(1) Served them faithfully. "Joseph had been unjustly enslaved, unjustly imprisoned, unjustly detained in his prison, and yet he declined not the work enjoined by his master" (Lawson). Joseph appears to have always acted on the principle commended by the royal preacher (Eccles. ix. 10), and on that recommended by Christ (Luke xiv. 11). "Joseph was a better man than the men whom he served. He was sprung from noble ancestors, and knew that he would one day be exalted above them; but at this time he cheerfully performed to them every service in his power" (Lawson). (2) Sympathised with them sincerely. Though bearing his own misfortunes with unmurmuring resignation and manly fortitude, because sustained by God's grace and the possession of truly religious principles, the amiability of Joseph's nature led him to commiserate his fellow-prisoners who had no such inward supports and consolations as were enjoyed by him. In particular on one occasion mentioned in the text he was so struck with their dejected countenances that he feelingly inquired the cause of their sadness. (3) Directed them wisely. Learning that they were troubled on account of dreams which they had dreamt overnight, and of which they could not find the explanation, he piously exhorted them to look to God for the desired interpretations.

II. THE DREAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS. 1. *The dreams*—(1) Agreed in the time when they occurred, happening on the same night; in the impressions they produced, filling the hearts of both dreamers with forebodings; in the person by whom they were explained, Joseph giving equally the key to both; and in the interval required for their fulfilment, only three days being allowed for the accomplishment of each. (2) Differed in the imagery of which they were composed—that of the butler consisting of a tableaux in which himself and his royal master appeared beneath the shadow of a blooming vine, Pharaoh sitting on his throne, and himself pressing the ripe clusters into Pharaoh's cup and setting it on Pharaoh's hand; and that of the baker representing himself also engaged in the performance of his official duties, bearing into Pharaoh's presence three wicker baskets of pastries and confections, out of the uppermost of which the birds came to eat;—in the character of the events which they foreshadowed—the butler's dream prognosticating speedy restoration to his butlership, and the baker's dream most ominously pointing to early execution. 2. *Their interpretations.* These were—(1) Revealed by God. Joseph did not claim to be able of himself to interpret the significance of either of the dreams, but explicitly affirmed that to do so was exclusively the prerogative of Elohim. (2) Declared by Joseph. Thus Joseph was authenticated as a prophet of the Lord in that heathen land. (3) Fulfilled by Pharaoh. Pharaoh was no doubt unconscious that he was accomplishing a Divine prediction. So God is able to accord to men the completest liberty of action, and yet realise his own sovereign purpose. Exactly as Joseph had interpreted, both as to time and as to results, the dreams came true.

III. THE INTERPRETER AND HIS REWARD. 1. *The interpreter's request.* Joseph desired in return for his services to the butler that a word should be spoken for him to the king by that officer when restored to his occupation, in the hope that it might lead to his release from confinement. For this conduct Joseph has been blamed by some censorious critics; but (1) his request was natural. Though required to endure the crosses laid on him by Divine providence with meekness and resignation, he was under no obligation to stay a moment longer in prison than he could justly help, but was rather bound to use all legitimate means to insure his deliverance. Then, (2) his request was moderate. He did not ask much at the butler's hand in return for his own great service, only that his name should be mentioned to Pharaoh. Joseph was not exacting in his demands. Again, (3) his request was touching. As he tells the butler, in the hope of moving him to pity, he was a stranger in a strange land, who had been forcibly abducted, though he does not say by whom. What a token of the kindly charity and truly forgiving spirit cherished by Joseph towards his brethren! And finally, (4) his request was just. He had done nothing to deserve imprisonment in that or any other dungeon. 2. *The interpreter's reward.* "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him." This must have been (1) a painful

experience to Joseph, probably as cruel and unkind a blow as any he had yet received; as certainly it was (2) a monstrous iniquity on the part of the butler, indicating a callous, ungrateful, and truly base disposition, though unfortunately it is (3) a frequent occurrence in human life.

Learn—1. That God's saints are sometimes thrown by Divine providence into companionship with the worst of men. 2. That the excellent of the earth are often found filling the very humblest situations. 3. That God has many different methods of discovering his mind to men. 4. That God is able to fulfil his own predictions. 5. That wicked men sometimes meet their deserts in this life. 6. That God's people should sympathise with and succour their fellow-men. 7. That they who do good to others should hope for nothing again.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xl.—*The inspired man.* Joseph is already supreme in the narrow sphere of the prison: "all was committed to his hand." The narrow sphere prepares him for the wider. The spiritual supremacy has now to be revealed. "Do not interpretations belong to God?" The dreams are partly of man and partly of God. Each man dreamed of things connected with his life. The butler of the wine coming from the grape-clusters, pressed into Pharaoh's cup, given into his hand. The baker of the white baskets and bakemeats, plucked from him while upon his head by the birds of prey. To a certain extent the interpretation was natural, but as at once communicated to Joseph it was inspired. The sphere of inspiration is concentric with the sphere of the natural intelligence and wisdom, but goes beyond it. The request of Joseph, that his spiritual superiority should be recognised and rewarded, was not fulfilled by the ungrateful man; but, as an act of obedience to the Spirit of God, it was committed to him who seeth in secret and rewardeth openly. Joseph is still being tried by the word of God. It is committed to him as a messenger and witness for the covenant people. It tries his faith and patience. The whole is a parable, setting forth—1. The order of the world, as resting on the Divine foreknowledge and appointment in connection with the elect instrumentalities, bringing the things of Egypt under the dominion of the kingdom of God. 2. The providential hiding of gracious purposes. Joseph the seer in the prison, waiting for the hour of redemption, sending forth messages of truth to do their errands. 3. Invisible links between the rulers of this world and the representatives of the kingdom of God to be revealed in due time. 4. Discipline in the lives of God's people fruitful in blessed results, both for them and for all.—R.

Ver. 8.—*The interpreter of God's message.* We cannot but notice the importance often assigned in the Bible to dreams, as channels of revelation from God. The dreams of Jacob and of Pharaoh, and passages such as Deut. xiii. 1 and Joel ii. 28, show this. It may be that in the absence of the written word, which in its completeness is our heritage, God's message was thus given to them in portions. Applying this thought to the circumstances of the text, we see men who had received a message from God which they believed was of importance; but they could not understand it, and they are sad because there is no interpreter.

I. THE DEEP IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S MESSAGE. How many questions does life present! What and where are we? Whither going? What lies beyond the present? I see that all things decay; yet on all sides life from death. Is there such revival for me? Can the active, thinking spirit be as though it had never been—passed from existence ere the frail body began to decay? And if there be a life beyond the present, what is its nature? and what the preparation for it? Vainly does human wisdom try to answer these questions. He who made all things alone can explain his works (Ps. xciv. 9—12), and the Bible is his answer to our questions, wherein he tells us what we are, for what created, and how to fulfil the object of our being (Ps. cxix. 105).

II. But WE NEED AN INTERPRETER. It may be asked, Why? The Bible is open. Its words are such as any one can understand. This is true, as far as regards facts, and precepts, and doctrines. There is a knowledge of the word which the natural

man can attain to; but the Holy Spirit alone can so open it as to make it "the power of God." It is one thing to know the doctrines of sin and of salvation, and quite another to know ourselves as sinners, and Christ as the Saviour. The one puffs up with pride of knowledge, the other leads to the one Foundation. There is no more dangerous snare than of ignoring this work of the Holy Spirit. Too often men do not believe their need of it, and do not believe in his help. And thus the Bible is found dull, and its teaching departed from in daily life.

III. How to get the interpreter's help. "Tell me." Think of our Lord watching his disciples in the boat. So he watches over thee, ready to help. Hast thou found it so? Has the light of God's love entered thy heart? It is the special work of the Holy Spirit to guide into all truth (John xvi. 13); not in solving mysteries and hard questions, but in revealing Christ to the heart. Have you sought this; sought with expectation the full gift; sought to know Christ (Phil. iii. 10), and the transforming power of belief in his love? Will you seek? There lies the difficulty—the want of earnestness. Men seem afraid of being earnest. But it is the earnest (Matt. xi. 12, βιασταὶ) who enter the kingdom of heaven.—M.

Ch. xl. 23; xli. 9.—*Pharaoh's forgetful butler.* "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him." "I do remember my faults this day." Good men have sometimes had to bear painful imprisonments. Think of Bunyan and Baxter shivering behind the bars of a narrow cell, where light and air were almost excluded, and where disease and death held sway. How much brightness, however, has broken at times from behind prison bars! We might not have had the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' unless Bunyan had been incarcerated on the banks of the Ouse. Nor might the patience and kindness of Joseph's disposition have shone out so brilliantly but for his prison life. In a work entitled 'Five Years' Penal Servitude' a most vivid description is given of how the criminals of the clever and cultured class have to mingle and work with those of ignorant and most sensual type. Defaulting cashiers have to undergo the same treatment as cowardly garotters and desperate burglars. Breaking the law brings any under its rigorous clutches, and levels all distinctions of class or education. Thus Joseph, a Hebrew slave, although not a criminal, would be despised by the chief butler of Pharaoh, but the butler had to associate with him. Indeed the former became his superior in prison, and was in a position to render to a State official certain kindness.

I. The forgetful ingrate. This man was a courtier, a permitted adviser of the Pharaoh of Egypt, but he is sent to the common prison. Joseph gives him much cheer, attention, and kindness. He seeks in every way to relieve the monotony of prison life, and becomes a prophet and religious helper. He sees the butler one day sad of countenance, and learns the reason. Readily he, by Divine help, interpreted the perplexing dream. His words are verified. The chief butler was doubtless profuse in his thanks and promises, but we see how he kept them. Perhaps the forgetfulness was convenient. He did not wish, after his restoration, to remind his monarch—even by making a request—of his having been formerly in disfavour. He possibly never intended to make any effort, unless it should be a gain to himself. He is a very different man in prison and out. This is the way of men in life. Favours slip from the memory like floods from a smoothly-worn rock. We might here possibly find out certain things in our own conduct which would indicate a similar forgetfulness of favours. For example, Christ came as the good Joseph to share our captive state. Think of what love he showed in bearing so much suffering for us. Do not put aside the thought of it as not being definitely for you. It was for each one, as if there were none other for whom to suffer. Some have not believed, have not come out from prison, but have preferred the darkness to light, have thought that the atonement was all unnecessary. They cannot understand how evil is their state until brought out of it. A beggar would not be troubled about his patches and rags in the common lodging-house; but let him be taken into a room of decently-arrayed people, and he then feels the difference, and shudders at his degraded appearance. When once brought into Christ's light we see from what we have been saved, and should be grateful to him. Some have been brought into union with him, and afterwards have declined from his way. Dangerous state.

We should blame others who were ungrateful; what if we have been! The longer action is postponed, the deeper the ingratitude, and the less likelihood is there that the favour will be felt. The longer postponed, the harder to acknowledge. Thus the butler may have hesitated to speak of Joseph because he would have to reveal his own ingratitude. Possibly he hoped Joseph was dead. Not so; Joseph lives. Forgotten by man, he is not forgotten by God. God will yet bring the forgetful one and his benefactor face to face.

II. Aroused memories. Wonderful is that faculty of the mind whereby we can imagine ourselves to exist in the past. Some have weak memories, others strong. Some have memories for places and thoughts, others for dates, figures, and words. Whether memory be strong or weak, the power of association is such that at times facts long past will be brought back most vividly. Revisiting places of interest, traversing certain countries, will bring to memory past friendships, and perhaps even subjects of conversation formerly held there. A house in which one has been born or trained becomes a complete history in time. Certain seasons arouse memories of the past, as birthdays, wedding days, Christmas time, or Easter. Certain circumstances also arouse memory. Pharaoh's perplexity concerning his dream forcibly reminded the butler of his morning of sadness in the prison. "I do remember," &c. The butler implied that he repented of his sins and of his forgetfulness. He may not have been very sincere, but as a courtier he introduces a subject in that way. Let us remember our faults, our inconsistencies as Christians, our hesitation to confess Christ, our excusing ourselves on the ground of the doings of others. Let us be plain with ourselves. Let us not see the motes in the eyes of others, and forget the beams in our own. Let us remember them that we may be humbled, may gain experience of how to avoid them in the future, may gain strength to resist, may gain pardon for past faults, and learn thereby more of the infinite forbearance and love of God, who is so willing to blot out our transgressions, and even the memory of our sins.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLI.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass at the end of two full years** (literally, *two years of days*, i. e. two complete years from the commencement of Joseph's incarceration, or more probably after the butler's liberation), **that Pharaoh**—on the import of the term *vide* ch. xii. 15. Under what particular monarch Joseph came to Egypt is a question of much perplexity, and has been variously resolved by modern Egyptologers in favour of—1. Osirtasen I., the founder of the twelfth dynasty, a prosperous and successful sovereign, whose name appears on a granite obelisk at Heliopolis (Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' i. 30, ed. 1878). 2. Assa, or Assis, the fifth king of the fifteenth dynasty of Shepherd kings (Stuart Poole in Smith's 'Bible Dict.,' art. Egypt). 3. Apophis, a Shepherd king of the fifteenth dynasty, whom all the Greek authorities agree in mentioning as the patron of Joseph (Osburn, 'Monumental History,' vol. ii. ch. 2; Thornley Smith, 'Joseph and his Times,' p. 42). 4. Thothmes III., a monarch of the eighteenth dynasty (Stanley Leathes in Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' p. 744). 5. Rameses III., the king of Memphis, a ruler belonging to the twentieth dynasty (Bonomi in 'The Imperial Bible Dict.,' p. 488; Sharpe's 'History of Egypt,' vol. i. p. 35). It may assist the student to arrive at a decision with respect to these contending aspirants for the throne of Pharaoh in the time of Joseph to know that Canon Cook ('Speaker's Commentary,' vol. i. p. 451), after an elaborate and careful as well as scholarly review of the entire question, regards it as at least "a very probable conjecture" that the Pharaoh of Joseph was Amenemha III., "who is represented on the lately-discovered table of Abydos as the last great king of all Egypt in the ancient empire (the last of the twelfth dynasty), and as such receiving divine honours from his descendant Rameses"—**dreamed.** "For the third time are dreams employed as the agencies of Joseph's history: they first foreshadow his illustrious future; they then manifest that the Spirit of God had not abandoned him even in the abject condition of a slave and a prisoner; and lastly they are made the immediate forerunners of his greatness" (Kalisch). **And, behold, he stood by the river**—*i. e.* upon the banks of the Nile, the term יְאֹר (an Egyptian word signifying great river or canal, in the Memphitic dialect *yaro*, in the Sahidic *yero*) being used almost exclusively in Scripture for the Nile (Exod. i. 22; ii. 3; vii. 15; Gesenius, 'Lex.,' p. 326). This

was the common name for the Nile among the Egyptians, the sacred being *Hapi* (Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary,' p. 485).

Ver. 2.—**And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine and fat-fleshed.** According to Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria, the heifer was regarded by the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of the earth, agriculture, and the nourishment derived therefrom. It was therefore natural that the succession of seven prosperous years should be represented by seven thriving cows. That they appeared ascending from the river is explained by the circumstance that the Nile by its annual inundations is the cause of Egypt's fertility (cf. Hävernick, 'Introd.,' § 21). A hymn to the Nile, composed by Euna (according to the generality of Egyptologers a contemporary of Moses), and translated from a papyrus in the British Museum by Canon Cook (who ascribes to it an earlier date than the nineteenth dynasty), describes the Nile as "overflowing the gardens created by Ra, . . . giving life to all animals, . . . watering the land without ceasing . . . Lover of food, bestower of corn . . . Bringer of food! Great Lord of provisions! Creator of all good things!" (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. iv. pp. 107, 108). **And they fed in a meadow**—בָּאָחוּ, ἐν τῷ Ἄχει (LXX.), literally, *in the Nile or reed grass.* The word אָחוּ appears to be an Egyptian term descriptive of any herbage growing in a stream. It occurs only here and in ver. 18, and Job viii. 11.

Ver. 3.—**And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favoured and lean-fleshed.** The second seven cows, "evil to look upon," *i. e.* bad in appearance, and "thin (beaten small, *dakoth*, from *dakak*, to crush or beat small) of flesh," also proceeded from the river, since a failure in the periodical overflow of the Nile was the usual cause of scarcity and famine in Egypt. **And stood by the** other **kine upon the brink of the river.** The use of the term lip, שָׂפָה, for brink, common enough in Hebrew (ch. xxii. 17; Exod. xiv. 30; 1 Kings v. 9), occurs also in a papyrus of the nineteenth dynasty, "I sat down by the lip of the river," which appears to suggest the impression that the verse in the text was written by one who was equally familiar with both languages (Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary,' p. 485).

Ver. 4.—**And the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine**—without there being any effect to show that they had eaten them (ver. 21). **So** (literally, *and*) **Pharaoh awoke.**

Ver. 5.—**And he slept and dreamed the second time** (that same night): **and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank** (*i. e.* fat) **and good.** This clearly pointed to the corn of the Nile valley, the *triticum compositum*, which bears seven ears upon one stalk. The assertion of Herodotus, that the Egyptians counted it a disgrace to live on wheat and barley (ii. 36), Wilkinson regards as incorrect, since "both wheat and barley are noticed in Lower Egypt long before Herodotus' time (Exod. ix. 31, 32), and the paintings of the Thebaid prove that they were grown extensively in that part of the country; they were among the offerings in the temples; and the king, at his coronation, cutting some ears of wheat, afterwards offered to the gods as the staple production of Egypt, shows how great a value was set on a grain which Herodotus would lead us to suppose was held in abhorrence" (Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' vol. ii. p. 49).

Ver. 6.—**And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them**—literally, *burnt up of the east,* קָדִים being put poetically for the fuller רוּחַ קָדִים. It has been urged that this displays a gross ignorance of the nature of the climate in Egypt (Bohlen), since a wind directly east is rare in Egypt, and when it does occur is not injurious to vegetation; but, on the other hand, it is open to reply (1) that direct east winds may be rare in Egypt, but so are dearth and famine such as that described in the narrative equally exceptional (Kalisch); (2) that the Hebrews having only names to describe the four principal winds, the *kadim* might comprise any wind blowing from an easterly direction (Hengstenberg); and (3) that the south-east wind, "blowing in the months of March and April, is one of the most injurious winds, and of longest continuance" (Hävernick). Hengstenberg quotes Ukert as saying, "As long as the south-east wind continues, doors and windows are closed; but the fine dust penetrates everywhere; everything dries up; wooden vessels warp and crack. The thermometer rises suddenly from 16° 20′, up to 30° 36°, and even 38°, Reaumur. This wind works destruction upon everything. The grass withers so that it entirely perishes if this wind blows long" ('Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 10).

Ver. 7.—**And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank** (*i. e.* fat) **and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold,** it was **a dream**—manifestly of the same import as that which had preceded. The dream was doubled because of its certainty and nearness (ver. 32).

Ver. 8.—**And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled;**—or, rather, his mind was agitated, ἐταράχθη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ (LXX.), *pavore perterritus* (Vulgate), the *ruach* being the seat of the senses, affections, and emotions of various kinds (cf. Dan. ii. 1; iv. 5, 19)—**and he**

sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt,—the חַרְטֻמִּים, from חָרַט (unused), to engrave, whence חֶרֶט, a stylus (Gesenius), or from חוּר, to see or explain, and טוּם, to conceal, *i. e.* he who explains hidden or mysterious things (Kalisch), were sacred scribes, ἱερογραμματεῖς, belonging to the priestly caste, who were skilled in making and deciphering the hieroglyphics. Besides figuring in the Court of Pharaoh (Exod. vii. 11, 22; viii. 3; xiv. 15) in the time of Moses, they recur again at a later period in that of the Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. i. 20; ii. 2)—**and all the wise men thereof.** The חֲכָמִים, from חָכַם, the primary idea of which is that of judging (Gesenius), were persons capable of judging, hence persons endowed with pre-eminent abilities for the prosecution of the ordinary business of life, the cultivation of the arts and sciences, the practice of divination, the interpreting of dreams, and other kindred occupations. They were the sages of the nation. **And Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.** The magicians of Egypt were not so conceited as their brethren in Babylon afterwards showed themselves to be, Dan. ii. 4 (Lawson). That they could not explain the dream, though couched in the symbolical language of the time, was no doubt surprising; but "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11), and they to whom the Spirit doth reveal them (1 Cor. ii. 10).

Vers. 9—13.—**Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:**—literally, *my faults I* (sc. am) *remembering to-day;* but whether he understood by his faults his ingratitude to Joseph or his offence against Pharaoh commentators are not agreed, though the latter seems the more probable—**Pharaoh was wroth with his servants,**—literally, *broke out against them* (vide ch. xl. 2)—**and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house,**—literally, *put me in custody of the house of the captain of the slaughterers* (cf. ch. xl. 3)—**both me and the chief baker: and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream** (*vide* ch. xl. 5). **And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 36); **and we told him** (*sc.* our dreams), **and he interpreted to us our dreams** (*vide* ch. xl. 12, 13, 18, 19); **to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he** (not Pharaoh, but Joseph) **restored unto mine office, and him he hanged** (*vide* ch. xl. 21, 22).

Ver. 14.—**Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily** (literally, *caused him to run*) **out of the dungeon** (*vide* ch. xl. 15): **and he shaved himself,**—this was exactly in accordance with Egyptian custom (Herod. ii. 36). Wilkinson states that "the custom of shaving the head as well as beard was not confined to the priests in Egypt, but was general among all classes" (Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' vol. ii. p. 49; cf. 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. pp. 330—332, ed. 1878). That the verb is not more exactly defined by a term following, such as the head (Numb. vi. 9), the beard (2 Sam. x. 4), but stands alone (the only instance of its intransitive use), appears to suggest that the writer was familiar with the practice of shaving (*vide* Hävernick, 'Introd.,' § 21)—**and changed his raiment,**—as required by the customs of Egypt (*vide* Hengstenberg's 'Egypt,' p. 30; cf. ch. xxxv. 2)—**and came** (or went) **in unto Pharaoh.**

Ver. 15.—**And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and** there **is none that can interpret it** (literally, *and interpreting it there is no one*): **and I have heard say of thee,** that **thou canst understand a dream to interpret it**—literally, *I have heard of thee, saying, thou hearest a dream to interpret it.*

Ver. 16.—**And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying,** It **is not in me** (literally, *not I*): **God**—Elohim (cf. ch. xl. 8)—**shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace**—literally, *shall answer the peace of Pharaoh,* i. e. what shall be for the welfare of Pharaoh. The rendering Ἄνευ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀποκριθήσεται τὸ σωτήριον Φαραώ (LXX.), though giving the sense, fails in accuracy of translation.

Vers. 17—24.—Pharaoh then relates his dreams in substantially the same terms as those in which they have already been recited, only adding concerning the lean kine that they were (ver. 19) **such as I never saw** (literally, *I never saw such as these*) **in all the land of Egypt for badness:** and that (ver. 21) **when they had eaten them** (*i. e.* the good kine) **up, it could not be known they had eaten them;**—literally, *and they* (i. e. the good kine) *went into the interior parts,* *i. e.* the stomach (of the bad kine), *and it was not known that they had gone into the interior parts*—but **they** (the bad kine) **were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning**—literally, *and their appearance was bad as in the beginning,* i. e. previously; and concerning the thin and blasted ears, that they were also (ver. 23) **withered**—צְנֻמוֹת, from צָנַם, to be hard, meaning either barren (Gesenius), dry (Fürst), or sapless (Kalisch)—a word which the LXX. and the Vulgate both omit. Onkelos explains by נִצָּן, flowering, but not

fruiting; and Dathius renders by *jejunæ*. After which he (*i. e.* Pharaoh) informs Joseph that the professional interpreters attached to the Court (the *chartummim*, or masters of the occult sciences) could give him no idea of its meaning.

Ver. 25.—**And Joseph said unto Pharaoh** (the inability of the magicians to read the dream of Pharaoh was the best proof that Joseph spoke from inspiration), **The dream of Pharaoh is one** (*i. e.* the two dreams have the same significance): **God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do** (literally, *what the Elohim is doing*, i. e. is about to do, *he causeth to be seen by Pharaoh*).

Vers. 26—32.—Proceeding with the interpretation of the dream, Joseph explains to Pharaoh that the seven good kine and the seven full ears point to a succession of **seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt** which were already coming (ver. 29), after which there should arise **seven years of famine**, in which all the plenty should be forgotten in the land, **and the famine should consume**, or make an end of, **the land** (ver. 30), **and the plenty should not be known in the land by reason of** (literally, *from the face of*, used of the efficient cause of anything, hence on account of) **that famine following**—literally, *the famine, that one, after* (things have happened) *so;* adding (ver. 32), **And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice** (literally, *and as for the doubling of the dream to Pharaoh twice*); it is **because the thing is established by God**,—literally, *the word* (or thing spoken of) *is firmly fixed*, i. e. certainly decreed, *by the Elohim*—**and God will shortly bring it to pass**—literally, *and hastening* (is) *the Elohim to do it.*

Vers. 33—36.—**Now therefore** (adds Joseph, passing on to suggest measures suitable to meet the extraordinary emergency predicted) **let Pharaoh look out a man discreet** (נָבוֹן, niph. part. of בִּין, intelligent, discerning), **and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers** (literally, *let him set overseers*, פְּקִדִים, from פָּקַד, to look after, in hiph. to cause to look after) **over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt**—literally, *let him fifth the land*, i. e. levy a tax upon its produce to that extent (LXX., Vulgate), which was double the annual impost exacted from Egyptian farmers, but which the unprecedented fertility of the soil enabled them to bear without complaint, if, indeed, adequate compensation was not given for the second tenth (Rosenmüller)—**in the seven plenteous years.** Diodorus mentions the payment of a fifth in productive years as a primitive custom (*vide* Hävernick, p. 219). **And let them** (the officers) **gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities** (or, food in the cities, and let them keep it). **And that food shall be for store** (literally, *something deposited*) **to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine**—literally, *and the land* (i. e. the people of the land) *shall not be cut off in, or by, the famine.*

Vers. 37, 38.—**And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.** The advice tendered recommended itself to the king and his ministers. **And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?** The Ruach Elohim, as understood by Pharaoh, meant the sagacity and intelligence of a deity (cf. Numb. xxvii. 18; Job xxxii. 8; Prov. ii. 6; Dan. iv. 8, 18; v. 11, 14; vi. 3).

Vers. 39, 40.—**And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as** (literally, *after*) **God** (Elohim) **hath shewed thee** (literally, *hath caused thee to know*) **all this**, there is none **so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled**—literally, *according to thy mouth shall all my people dispose themselves*, i. e. they shall render obedience to thy commands (LXX., Vulgate, Onkelos, Saadias, Pererius, Dathius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Murphy, and others); though by many competent authorities (Calvin, Schultens, Knobel, Ainsworth, Gesenius, Fürst, Wordsworth, *et alii*) the rendering is preferred, "upon thy mouth shall all my people kiss," against which, however, is the fact that not even then were governors accustomed to be kissed on the lips by their subjects in token of allegiance. The suggestion that the verb should be taken in the sense of "arm themselves," as in 2 Chron. xvii. 17 (Aben Ezra), does not meet with general acceptance. **Only in the throne** (or, more accurately, only as to the throne) **will I be greater than thou.**

Vers. 41—43.—**And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.** This was the royal edict constituting Joseph grand vizier or prime minister of the empire: the formal installation in office followed. **And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand,**—the use of a signet-ring by the monarch, which Bohlen admits to be in accordance with the accounts of classic authors ('Introd.,' p. 60), has recently received a remarkable illustration by the discovery at Koujunjik, the site of the ancient Nineveh, of a seal impressed from the bezel of a metallic finger-ring, two inches long by one wide, and bearing the image, name, and titles of the Egyptian king Sabaco (*vide*

Layard, 'Nineveh and Babylon,' p. 156)—**and put it upon Joseph's hand** (thus investing him with regal authority), **and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen,**—שֵׁשׁ, βυσσίνη (LXX.), byssus, so called from its whiteness (probably a Hebrew imitation of an Egyptian word), was the fine linen of Egypt, the material of which the peculiar dress of the priestly caste was constructed: "*vestes ex gossypio sacerdotibus Ægypti gratissimæ*" (Pliny, 'Nat. Hist.,' xix. 1). Herodotus (ii. 81) agrees with Pliny in affirming the priestly costume to have been of linen, and not of wool—**and put a**—literally, *the*, the article showing that it was so done in accordance with a common custom (Hengstenberg, 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 30)—**gold chain about his neck** (cf. Dan. v. 7, 29). This was usually worn by persons of distinction, and appears in the monuments as a royal ornament; in the Beni-hassan sepulchral representations, a slave being exhibited as bearing one of them, with the inscription written over it, "Necklace of Gold" (*vide* Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' ii. 343, ed. 1878; Hengstenberg, 'Egypt,' p. 30). **And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had;**—"which is another genuine Egyptian custom, for on the monuments the king constantly appears in his war-chariot" (Hävernick);—**and they cried before him, Bow the knee:**—אַבְרֵךְ, regarded by most ancient translators as a Hebrew word, an inf. abs. hiph. from בָּרַךְ, meaning bow the knee (Vulgate, Aquila, Origen, Kimchi), is most probably an Egyptian word either altered by the writer (Gesenius) or pointed by the Masorites (Keil) to resemble Hebrew, and signifying "bow the head" (Gesenius), "bend the knee" (Fürst), "Governor or Viceroy" (Kalisch), "rejoice thou" (Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary'), "Pure Prince" (Osburn), "Robed by the king" (Forster)—**and he made him ruler**—literally, *and he set him* (by the foregoing acts)—**over all the land of Egypt.**

Ver. 44.—**And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.** Joseph's authority was to be absolute and universal.

Ver. 45.—**And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah;**—an Egyptian word, of which the most accredited interpretations are χονθομφανήχ (LXX.); *Salvator Mundi* (Vulgate); "the Salvation of the World," answering to the Coptic P-sote-m-ph-eneh—*P* the article, *sote* salvation, *m* the sign of the genitive, *ph* the article, and *eneh* the world (Fürst, Jablonsky, Rosellini, and others); "the Rescuer of the World" (Gesenius); "the Prince of the Life of the World" (Brugsch); "the Food of Life," or "the Food of the Living" (Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary')—**and he gave him to wife**—cf. the act of Rhampsinitus, who gave his daughter in marriage to the son of an architect on account of his cleverness (Herod., ii. 121)—**Asenath**—another Egyptian term, rendered 'Ασενέθ (LXX.), and explained by Egyptologers to mean, "She who is of Neith, *i. e.* the Minerva of the Egyptians" (Gesenius, Fürst), "the Worshipper of Neith" (Jablonsky), "the Favourite of Neith" (Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary'), though by some authorities regarded as Hebrew (Poole in Smith's 'Dictionary,' art. Joseph)—**the daughter of Poti-pherah**—Poti-pherah ("devoted to the sun")=Potiphar (*vide* ch. xxxix. 1). The name is very common on Egyptian monuments (Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 32)—**priest**—or prince (Onkelos), as in 2 Sam. viii. 18, where the word כֹּהֵן, as explained by 1 Chron. xviii. 17, means a principal minister of State, though the probability is that Poti-pherah belonged to the priestly caste in Egypt—**of On**—or Heliopolis, 'Ηλιούπολις (LXX.), the name on the monuments being ta-Râ or pa-Râ, house of the sun. "The site of Heliopolis is still marked by the massive walls that surround it, and by a granite obelisk bearing the name of Osirtasen I., of the twelfth dynasty, dating about 3900 years ago" (Wilkinson in Rawlinson's 'Herod.,' ii. p. 8). The priests attached to the temple of the sun at Heliopolis enjoyed the reputation of being the most intelligent and cultured historians in Egypt (Herod., ii. 3). That a priest's daughter should have married with a foreign shepherd may have been distasteful to the prejudices of an intolerant priesthood (Bohlen), but in the case of Asenath and Joseph it was recommended by sundry powerful considerations. 1. Though a foreign shepherd, Joseph was a descendant of Abraham, whom a former Pharaoh had recognised and honoured as a prince, and 'The Story of Saneha,' a hieratic papyrus belonging to the twelfth dynasty, shows that Eastern foreigners might even become sons-in-law to the most powerful potentates under the ancient empire (*vide* 'Records of the Past,' vol. vi. pp. 135—150). 2. Though a foreign shepherd, Joseph was at this time grand vizier of the realm, with absolute control of the lives and fortunes of its people (*vide* ver. 44). 3. Though a foreign shepherd, he was obviously a favourite of Pharaoh, who, besides being monarch of the realm, was the recognised head of the priestly caste, over whom, therefore, he exercised more than a merely external authority. 4. Though a foreign shepherd Joseph had become a naturalised Egyptian, as may be gathered from ch. xliii. 32. And, 5. Though a foreign

shepherd, he was circumcised, which, if this rite was already observed in Egypt, and did not originate with Joseph, would certainly not prove a bar to the contemplated alliance (*vide* Canon Cook in 'Speaker's Commentary,' vol. i. p. 480; Kurst, 'Hist. of Old Covenant,' § 88; Hengstenberg, 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' pp. 32—35). As to the probability of Joseph consenting to become son-in-law to a heathen priest, it may suffice to remember that though marriage with idolaters was expressly forbidden by patriarchal commandment (ch. xxiv. 3; xxviii. 1), and afterwards by Mosaic statute (ch. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3), it was sometimes contracted for what seemed a perfectly adequate reason, viz., the furtherance of the Divine purposes concerning Israel, and apparently too with the Divine sanction (cf. the cases of Moses, Exod. ii. 21, and Esther, ch. ii. 16); that Joseph may have deemed the religion of Egypt, especially in its early symbolical forms, as perfectly compatible with a pure monotheistic worship, or, if he judged it idolatrous, he may both have secured for himself complete toleration and have felt himself strong enough to resist its seductions; that Asenath may have adopted her husband's faith, though on this, of course, nothing can be affirmed; and lastly, that the narrator of this history pronounces no judgment on the moral quality of Joseph's conduct in consenting to this alliance, which, though overruled for good, may have been, considered in itself, a sin. **And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt** in the discharge of his vice-regal duties.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—45.—*Joseph before Pharaoh, or from the prison to the throne.* I. THE DREAMS OF THE MONARCH. 1. *His midnight visions.* Two full years have expired since the memorable birthday of Pharaoh which sent the baker to ignominious execution, but restored the butler to the favour of his royal master. Slumbering upon his bed, the king of Egypt seems to stand among the tall grass upon the banks of the Nile. First seven well-formed and full-fleshed heifers appear to climb up one after the other among the reeds from the river's edge, where they have probably been drinking, followed by seven lean and haggard animals, walking up in the same mysterious procession, till they stand side by side with their thriving predecessors, when they suddenly fall upon these predecessors and eat them up. Startled by the strangeness of the scene, the royal sleeper wakes only to discover it a dream. Then composing himself a second time to slumber, he finds himself still standing in the Nile valley, but now looking out towards its luxuriant corn-fields. Again a strange phenomenon occurs. Growing from the soil he sees a tall, massive stalk of corn, with seven fat ears depending from its top; but scarcely has this arrested his attention, when he notices another by its side, spare and feeble, with its seven ears parched and empty, as if they had been burnt up by the hot south-east winds blowing up from the sandy wastes of Arabia. To his astonishment, as before, the fat ears are devoured by the thin. Awaking, he a second time discovers that he has been dreaming. 2. *His morning agitations.* The spirit of the king of Egypt was troubled first because of the dreams, which he obviously regarded as conveying to his royal mind some supernatural communication, which, however, he failed to understand; and secondly because the interpretation of them appeared equally to baffle the penetration of all the wise men and magicians of his empire, whom he had summoned to assist him in deciphering their import.

II. THE INTERJECTION OF THE BUTLER. 1. *The recollection of his faults.* If this referred to his ingratitude to Joseph (which is scarcely likely), that was a shortcoming which should have been remembered at least two years before, though it was better he should recall it then than never. But it is more than probable the offence spoken of was the crime for which he had been previously imprisoned by Pharaoh, and of which he now confessed himself to be guilty, as without acknowledging the justness of his royal master's anger he could scarcely hope to experience the mildness of his royal master's favour. That he only remembers Joseph when he deems it possible by doing so to gratify his master and serve himself indicates a disposition as hypocritical and time-serving as ungrateful and unfeeling. 2. *The recital of his mercies.* Narrating the story of his imprisonment, he informs the anxious monarch that he and his late companion, the chief baker, while suffering the righteous penalty of their misdeeds in the round house or State prison, had each a

dream on one and the self-same night; that a young man, then an inmate of the cells, a Hebrew, and a servant of the provost marshal, to whom they severally related their extraordinary dreams, volunteered to deliver their interpretation; and that the event, in the case of both himself and his companion, had turned out exactly as had been predicted—the chief baker had been hanged, while himself, the chief butler, through the royal clemency of Pharaoh, had been restored to his office.

III. THE APPEARANCE OF THE PRISONER. 1. *The opening of the interview.* In obedience to a royal summons, Joseph, after shaving and exchanging his prison garb for a costume suited to the high occasion, is hastily presented to the king. Regarding him with mingled feelings of respect and awe, the mighty potentate declares his dilemma,—he has dreamed a dream which has baffled the ingenuity of all the Court magicians,—and explains how he has heard of Joseph's rare skill as an interpreter of dreams, upon which Joseph, disclaiming all ability in himself, and pointing Pharaoh to the true Interpreter of dreams, assures him, speaking in the exercise of prophetic faith, that God would vouchsafe to him an answer that should tend at once to the happiness of his own person and the prosperity of his realm. 2. *The interpretation of the dreams.* Listening to the monarch's recitation of the singular phenomena of his nocturnal visions, Joseph (1) declares their import to be the coming of seven years of plenty to the land, to be followed by seven years of famine, which should consume the land by reason of its severity; (2) affirms the certainty of this prediction as involved in the repetition of the dream; and (3) concludes by recommending as a precautionary measure that a fifth part of the produce of the seven years of plenty should be taken up and stored in granaries in the chief cities of the empire, to be distributed among the people during the seven years of famine—a measure which would necessitate the appointment of one competent officer with a requisite staff of assistants, and with supreme authority to enforce the tax or compel the sale, according as the king might determine to uplift the grain. 3. *The reward of the interpreter.* As became one who had proved of such incomparable service to the monarch and the State, Joseph was immediately and generously recompensed. (1) His counsel was accepted. "The thing," or advice tendered, "was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants." It is ever a grief to God's prophets and Christ's ministers when their Divinely-sent communications are rejected, as the acceptance of their heavenly messages never fails to afford them occasion of rejoicing. (2) His person was exalted. (*a*) He was constituted grand vizier of the empire, in the historian's account of which may be noticed the monarch's resolution and the reason of it—"Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled," or dispose themselves; the royal edict and the public attestation of it—"See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring," &c.; the extent of his authority and the limitation of it—his power was to be absolute over all the realm—"without thee shall no man lift up hand or foot"—only as to the throne was he to be subordinate to Pharaoh. (*b*) He was naturalised as an Egyptian prince by the assignment of a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah, for the import of which the Exposition may be consulted. (*c*) He was married to a daughter of the priestly caste, who formed the highest dignitaries in the State.

Learn—1. The marvellous facility with which God can accomplish his designs. God can make Pharaoh dream and the butler recollect his faults when it is time to bring Joseph out of prison. 2. The amazing incompetence of human wisdom to understand God's riddles. The world by wisdom knows not God, any more than Pharaoh's magicians could interpret his dreams. 3. The extraordinary insight which those have who receive their teaching from God. Joseph can interpret the dreams of the monarch and the dreams of his officers with a like promptitude and accuracy, and God's people have an unction from the Holy One that enables them to know all things. 4. The incomparable greatness to which Christ's followers will eventually be raised. Joseph stepped from the prison to the palace, from the tower to the throne, from the wearing of iron fetters to the wielding of regal power; and such honour will have all the saints in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. Even now God "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people;"

but then "to him that overcometh will I grant," saith the King, "to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne."

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xli.—The tried man is now made ready by long experience for his position of responsibility and honour. He is thirty years old. He can commence his public ministry for the people of God and the world. Pharaoh's dreams, the kine and the ears of corn, like those of the butler and baker, have their natural element in them; but apart from the Spirit of God Joseph would not have dared to give them such an interpretation. Even had his intelligence penetrated the secret, he would not have ventured on a prophecy without God. Pharaoh himself acknowledged that the Spirit of God was manifestly in Joseph. We may be sure there was evidence of Divine authority in his words and manner. As a testimony to the existence of a spirit of reverence for Divine teaching, and a reference of all great and good things to God as their source, even in the minds of the Egyptians, such facts show that God had not left the world without light. The farther we go back in human history, the more simple and unsophisticated we find the minds of men, pointing to a primitive revelation, to the religious beginning of the human race, and to their corruption being the result of a fall, and not a mere negative state, the state of undeveloped reason. Joseph is lifted up out of the dungeon and made to sit among princes. He submits to the providential appointment, doubtless, under the guidance of the same Spirit which had given him his superiority. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter because at that time to be so was to be separated from his people. Joseph the slave, already far from his home, is willing to be Pharaoh's prime minister that he may be the forerunner of his people's exaltation. The opportunity was not to be lost. "God," he said, "hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." "God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." The very names given to Manasseh and Ephraim were a testimony to his faith. His forgetting was only to a better remembering. We must sometimes hide power for the sake of its manifestation. "All countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn." "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." As a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Hebrew slave exalted to the rule of the world and the saving of the world, from the cross to the throne. The whole story is full of analogies. He that distributes the bread of life to a perishing race was himself taken from prison, was treated as a malefactor, was declared the Ruler and Saviour because the Spirit of God was upon him, was King of kings and Lord of lords. His benefits and blessings distributed to the world are immediately identified with his kingdom. He gathers in that he may give out. He is first the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of the seven years of plenty, and then the all-merciful helper and redeemer in the seven years of famine. "Joseph is a fruitful bough."—R.

Ver. 14.—*The blessing of suffering wrongfully.* Joseph had probably been three years in prison (cf. ver. 1 with xl. 4). Sorely must his faith have been tried. His brothers, who had plotted his death, prosperous; himself a slave, spending the best years of his life in prison; and that because he had been faithful to God and to his master. We know the end, and therefore hardly realise his desolate condition when no sign of anything but that he should live and die uncared for and forgotten. But the trial comes more home to us when some one for whom we care, or perhaps ourselves, "endure grief, suffering wrongfully;" when unsuspecting frankness has been overreached, or trust betrayed, or feebleness oppressed. We feel not only that wrong has been done, but as if there had been a failure in God's care. It is one thing to acknowledge the doctrine of God's providence, and quite another to feel it under pressure of trouble. A frequent mistake to think of suffering as calling for immediate restitution. Since God beholds the wrong, should there not be some speedy token that he does so? The truth which faith has to grasp is that God is carrying out a plan, for which all these things are a preparation. We may not be able to trace it; but it is so. Thus it was with Joseph. All through these sad years God was guiding him. It was not merely that in time the cloud was removed; every

step of the way had its purpose (John xvi. 20). In the prison he was learning lessons of the soul,—unlearning the spirit of censoriousness and of self-complacency (ch. xxxvii. 2),—and, by obeying, learning how to rule. And the course of events bore him on to what was prepared for him. Had he remained at home, or returned thither, or had Potiphar not cast him into prison, he would not have been the head of a great work in Egypt, the helper of his family, the instrument of fulfilling God's promise. Not one step of his course was in vain; his sufferings were blessings.

I. In suffering wrong we are following Christ. He suffered for us, "leaving us an example" (1 Pet. ii. 21) of willingness to suffer for the good of others. This is the principle of self-sacrifice; not a self-willed sacrifice (Col. ii. 23), but the submission of the will to God (Luke xxii. 42; Heb. x. 7). "This is acceptable with God"—to accept as from him what he sends, though we may not see its use (Heb. xii. 5—7).

II. For every Christian the discipline of suffering is needful. If it was so in our Lord's sinless human nature (Heb. ii. 10), how much more in us, who must be taught to subdue the flesh to the spirit! Without trial Christian courage and fruit-bearing graces would fail (John xv. 2), as without the winter's cold the forest tree would not form sound wood. And trial calls them into exercise (Rom. v. 3), and through a sense of our weakness draws us nearer to God (2 Cor. xii. 7—9).

III. Not only trial in general, but every part of it works good. To every part the promise applies (John xvi. 20). So it was with Joseph. God lays no stroke without cause (Heb. xii. 10). The conviction of this works practical patience. This particular suffering has its own loving message.

IV. We often cannot foresee the purpose of trials. How different was the end to which God was leading Joseph from anything he could have expected or hoped for! Yet far better. We can see but a very little way along the path by which God is leading us. We walk by faith that his guidance is unerring, and that which he has provided is best (Ephes. iii. 20).—M.

Ver. 40.—*Joseph as prime minister*. "Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." Sudden elevations are often the precursors of sudden falls. It was not so with Joseph. He filled satisfactorily his position, retaining it to the end of life. He made himself indispensable to Pharaoh and to the country. He was a man of decision. Seeing what had to be done, he hesitated not in commencing it. Going from the presence of Pharaoh, he passed throughout the land, arranging for granaries and appointing officers to grapple with the seven years of famine which were imminent. Doubtless he felt the weight of responsibility resting upon him, and would have many restless nights in calculating how by means of the money then in the treasury and by forced loans to meet the expenditure for granaries, grain, and official salaries. He superintended everything. By method he mastered detail.

I. Consider the policy of this Egyptian prime minister. Many things we admire in Joseph, but we must not be blind to the fact that he thought more of binding the people to the throne than of benefiting the people themselves. He was the first statesman of that day. His policy determined in great measure what should be the standard of internal prosperity, and what position the country should hold in the eyes of other nations. He sought to make Pharaoh's rule absolute. He gave no benefit without payment, no supplies without sacrifice. He took all the money first (ch. xlvii. 14), then the cattle (*ibid.* ver. 16), then the lands and their persons (*ibid.* ver. 23). He thus reduced the people of Egypt to the position of slaves. He made all the land crown lands. Thus the monarch was pleased, and the priests, being exempt, were flattered. It is possible that in this Joseph laid the foundation of that system of mismanagement which has made the most flourishing spot in the world the basest of kingdoms. He seems also to have striven to give some sort of pre-eminence to his brethren, and to advance them. Exempt from the burdens pressing on others, they gained power, and would have become eventually the dominant race in Egypt, but that another Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph, *i. e.* who, although he knew of his having lived and served the nation, yet recognised not his policy. The state to which Joseph reduced the Egyptians was that to which after-

wards his own descendants were reduced. Thus our plans are overthrown. Time tries success, and by removing dimness from our vision enables us to test it better.

II. CONSIDER THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THIS EGYPTIAN PRIME MINISTER. He was soon led to conform to the spirit and practice of an ungodly nation. He used a divining cup (ch. xliv. 15, 16), took his meals apart (ch. xliii. 32), recognising and sustaining class distinctions. He learned the mode of speech common among the Egyptians, swore by the life of Pharaoh (ch. xlii. 15), and was affianced to an idolatress, probably a priestess (ch. xli. 45). He made no effort to return to his own land, or to the pastoral life of his fathers. It was in his power also for nine years to have sent to make search for his father, who was sorrowing for him as dead, but he sent not. Not until trouble, by an apparent chance, drove his brethren to him did he appear to think of them, or of home and Jacob. When they came he was very slow to make known himself, as though he feared it might compromise him in the eyes of the Egyptians to be known to have relatives who were shepherds, an occupation which was abominable to the Egyptians (ch. xlvi. 34). When he revealed himself to them, it was without the knowledge or presence of the Egyptians. He removed his brethren also to a distant part of Egypt, that they might not constantly, by their presence, remind him and others of his origin. We fancy that Joseph had weaknesses and imperfections such as other men had. He had dwelt in Egypt and caught its spirit. In the names he gave to his children there seems some indication of regret at his forgetfulness and wonder at his fruitfulness. Amid views that might depress there is some brightness. His forgiveness of his brethren was noble. His affection for his father returned. His faith in God was pure at last. Dying, he "gave commandment concerning his bones." He showed that though outwardly an Egyptian, he was inwardly an Israelite.—H.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 46.—**And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt**—literally, *a son of thirty years in his standing before Pharaoh*. If, therefore, he had been three years in prison (ch. xl. 4; xli. 1), he must have served for ten years in the house of Potiphar. **And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh** (in the performance of his official duties), **and went throughout all the land of Egypt**—superintending the district overseers.

Vers. 47, 48.—**And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls** (*i. e.* abundantly). **And he** (Joseph, through his subordinates) **gathered up all the food** (*i. e.* all the portions levied) **of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities**:—men bringing corn into granaries appear upon the monuments at Beni-hassan (Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. p. 371, ed. 1878) — **the food of the field, which was round about every city** (literally, *the food of the field of the city, which was in its environs*), **laid he up in the same** (literally, *in the midst of it*).

Ver. 49.—**And Joseph gathered** (or heaped up) **corn as the sand of the sea,**—an image of great abundance (cf. ch. xxxii. 12)—**very much, until he left numbering** (*i. e.* writing, or keeping a record of the number of bushels); **for it was without number.** "In a tomb at Eilethya a man is represented whose business it evidently was to take account of the number of bushels which another man, acting under him, measures. The inscription is as follows: 'The writer or registrar of bushels—Thutnofre," (Hengstenberg, 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 36).

Vers. 50, 51.—**And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came,** (literally, *before the coming of the years of famine*), **which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh** ("Forgetting," from *nashah*, to forget): **For God** (Elohim; Joseph not at the moment thinking of his son's birth in its relations to the theocratic kingdom, but simply in its connection with the overruling providence of God which had been so signally illustrated in his elevation, from a position of obscurity in Canaan to such conspicuous honour in the land of the Pharaohs), said he, **hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.** Not absolutely (Calvin, who censures Joseph on this account, *vix tamen in totum potest excusari oblivio paternæ domus*), as events subsequently proved, but relatively, the pressure of his former affliction being relieved by his present happiness, and the loss of his father's house in some degree compensated by the building of a house for himself.

Ver. 52.—**And the name of the second called he Ephraim**:—"Double Fruitfulness" (Keil), "Double Land" (Gesenius), "Fruit"

(Fürst)—**For God (Elohim) hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.** This language shows that Joseph had not quite forgotten "all his toil."

Vers. 53, 54.—**And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come,**—the most complete parallel to Joseph's famine was that which occurred in A.D. 1064—1071, in the reign of Fâtimee Khaleefeh, El-Mustansir-b-illâh, when the people ate corpses and animals that died of themselves; when a dog was sold for five, a cat for three, and a bushel of wheat for twenty deenars (*vide* Smith's 'Bib. Dict.,' art. Famine)—**according as Joseph had said** (thus confirming Joseph's character as a prophet): **and the dearth was in all lands**;—*i. e.* in all the adjoining countries, and notably in Palestine (*vide* ch. xlii. 1, 2)—**but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.**

Ver. 55.—**And when** (literally, *and*) **all the land of Egypt was famished** (literally, *and*), **the people cried to Pharaoh for bread**:—cf. the famine in Samaria (2 Kings vi. 26)—**and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.**

Vers. 56, 57.—**And the famine was over all the face of the earth** (*vide supra*, ver. 54): **And Joseph opened all the storehouses,**—literally, *all wherein was*, i. e. all the magazines that had grain in them. The granaries of Egypt are represented on the monuments. "In the tomb of Amenemha at Beni-hassan there is the painting of a great storehouse, before whose door lies a great heap of grain already winnowed. Near by stands the bushel with which it is measured, and the registrar who takes the account" (Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 36)—**and sold unto the Egyptians** (cf. Prov. ii. 26);—**and the famine waxed sore** (literally, *became strong*) **in the land of Egypt.** A remarkable inscription from the tomb at Eileythia of Bava, which Brugsch ('Histoire d'Egypte,' second ed., p. 174, *seqq.*) assigns to the latter part of the seventeenth dynasty, mentions a dearth of several years in Egypt ("A famine having broken out during many years, I gave corn to the town during each famine"), which that distinguished Egyptologer identifies with the famine of Joseph under Apophis, the shepherd king (*vide* 'Encyclopedia Britannica,' ninth edition, art. Egypt); but this, according to Bunsen ('Egypt's Place,' iii. 334), is rather to be detected in a dearth of several years which occurred in the time of Osirtasen I., and which is mentioned in an inscription at Beni-hassan, recording the fact that during its prevalence food was supplied by Amenee, the governor of a district of Upper Egypt (Smith's 'Dict.,' art. Joseph). The character of Chnumhotep (a near relative and favourite of Osirtasen I., and his immediate successor), and the recorded events of his government, as described in the Beni-hassan monuments, also remind one of Joseph:—"he (*i. e.* Chnumhotep) injured no little child; he oppressed no widow; he detained for his own purpose no fisherman; took from his work no shepherd; no overseer's men were taken. There was no beggar in his days; no one starved in his time. When years of famine occurred he ploughed all the lands of the district, producing abundant food; no one starved in it; he treated the widow as a woman with a husband to protect her" (*vide* 'Speaker's Commentary,' vol. i. p. 450). **And all countries** (*i. e.* people from all the adjoining lands) **came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because the famine was so sore in all lands.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 46—57.—*Joseph on the second throne in Egypt.* I. DURING THE SEVEN YEARS OF PLENTY. 1. *His mature manhood* (ver. 46). Thirteen years had elapsed since his brethren had sold him at Dothan, and during the interval what a chequered life had he experienced! Carried into Egypt by the spice caravan of the Midianitish traders, he had been sold a second time as a slave. Ten years had he served as a bondman, first as a valet to the provost marshal of the slaughterers, and then as overseer of the great man's household. Three years more he had spent in prison, having been incarcerated on a charge of which he was entirely innocent. And now, at the age of thirty, he is the wisest and the greatest man in Egypt. God has strange ways of developing the talents, maturing the experience, and advancing the honour of his sons. The case of Joseph is a signal illustration of the beneficial uses of adversity, and shows that the true road to success in life, to the acquisition of wisdom, or of power, or of wealth, or of fame, or of all combined, often lies through early hardships and trials, disasters and defeats. 2. *His political activity* (vers. 46—49). As grand vizier of the empire, Joseph's labours during this period must have been many and laborious: surveying the corn-producing land of the country, and dividing it for purposes of taxation into districts, appointing overseers in every district,

erecting granaries or government stores in every city of any size or importance, and generally superintending in every corner of the empire the work of uplifting the fifth part of the superabundant harvests of these precious years when the earth brought forth by handfuls. The result was, that by the close of this period the Egyptian government had collected corn as the sand of the sea, very much, and without number. 3. *His domestic prosperity* (ver. 50). On the name of Joseph's wife, and the questions connected with the subject of her marriage with Joseph, the Exposition under ver. 45 may be consulted. That the marriage itself was approved by God there is no sufficient reason to doubt, and that it was a marriage of affection may be inferred from the sentiments expressed by Joseph on the occasion of his sons' births. The birth of his children also was interpreted by him to be a mark of Divine favour. What a signal reward for the fidelity and purity of Joseph's behaviour in the house of Potiphar three years before! Had Joseph at that time left the straight path of virtue, where had been his advancement and felicity now? Even in this life God puts a premium in the long run on a life of purity. 4. *His personal piety* (vers. 51, 52). To some indeed Joseph's language on the birth of Manasseh appears somewhat hard to reconcile at least with true *filial* piety. Why did not Joseph, on reaching his exalted station in Egypt, at once communicate with his father? Was this a just or generous reward for what he had experienced of the old man's parental affection, and, what he must have still felt assured of, the old man's sorrow for his imagined death? Yet Joseph talks as if he had forgotten his father's house, as well as all his toil, in the splendour of his fame and the exuberance of his happiness in Egypt. But that these words are not to be interpreted literally becomes apparent, not alone from the pathetic meeting with his brethren and his father, soon to be described, but also from the statement which he makes upon the birth of Ephraim, in which he still characterises Egypt as the land of his affliction. That Joseph did not at once declare his parentage and send a message home to Hebron may be explained by many reasons without resorting to the hypothesis that "Joseph was still unable to attain perfect calm and cherish sentiments of love and forgiveness" towards his brethren (Kurtz): as, *e.g.*, the comparative insecurity that must have attended his position in Egypt until the years of famine came, an unwillingness prematurely to reveal to his father the full depth of wickedness of which his brethren had been guilty, a secret impression made upon his mind by God that the time of disclosure was not yet. At all events Joseph's conduct in this matter discovers nothing essentially inconsistent with a piety which shines out conspicuously in the grateful recognition of the hand of God in turning for him the shadow of death into the morning.

II. DURING THE SEVEN YEARS OF DEARTH. 1. *His reputation as a prophet fully confirmed* (vers. 53, 54). God is always careful to maintain the honour of his own prophets. Whatever message he transmits to the world or the Church through a messenger of his sending, he will in due time see to its fulfilment. No true ambassador of heaven need entertain the slightest apprehensions as to the failure of the words which God provides for him to speak. If he is not always, like Samuel, established as a prophet of the Lord at the beginning of his ministry (1 Sam. iii. 20), his claim to that distinction will in due course be made good by the exact accomplishment of what God has through his lips foretold. 2. *His sagacity as an administrator clearly established* (ver. 55). If Pharaoh had any doubts as to the wisdom of Joseph's proposal during the seven years of plenty, assuredly he had none now. With a famishing population all around him, what could Pharaoh have done, how averted the destruction of his people, and possibly the overthrow of his own dynasty, if it had not been for the prudent forethought of Joseph? Happy are the kings who have wise men in their kingdoms, and who, when they have them, can trust them. 3. *His work as a saviour hopefully begun* (ver. 56). If it be asked why Joseph did not gratuitously distribute Pharaoh's corn among the perishing multitudes, the reply is obvious. (1) In all probability the grain had been previously purchased from the people. (2) The people had been warned of the impending calamity, and might have exercised a little of the forethought of Joseph, and by care and economy provided for the day of want. (3) To have given the corn gratuitously would have resulted in a too lavish distribution, and for the most part to the greedy and the prodigal

rather than to the really necessitous. (4) By affixing to it a price the people were encouraged as long as possible to practise frugality and preserve independence. Wise governors will be slow in making paupers of their subjects. This is one of the dangers connected with the Poor Law Administration in our own land. (5) It enabled Joseph by a judicious husbanding of resources to extend the circle of relief to the starving populations of other countries who came to him to purchase corn.

Learn—1. The sin of national wastefulness. 2. The value of a wise statesman. 3. The compatibility of piety with both personal greatness and political activity. 4. The propriety of setting mercies over against misfortunes. 5. The proper end of all government and legislation—the happiness and safety of the people. 6. The true duty of a monarch—to sympathise with and direct his subjects. 7. The legitimate ambition for a nation—to be an object of attraction for good to surrounding countries.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 54.—*Destitution and abundance.* "And the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread." The time of harvest is, of all periods of the year, the most important. It is the point to which all previous operations of the cultivator have tended. He knows how much depends on the weather and God's mercy. Having done all he can, he has to wait, and the harvest-time determines results. Those who are not engaged in agriculture are concerned in a harvest. Suppose there were none; non-producers must starve. Dwelling in great towns and cities, many who are engaged in traffic or manufacture may easily overlook harvest-time, and forget their dependence on God for daily bread. They see not the sown fields, they watch not the springing blade, they seize not the sharp sickle, they join not in piling up the pointed stacks, and are therefore likely to forget dependence on God. It is well that God forgets us not. He has ever kept his promise—"So long as the earth remaineth," &c. No year has passed without harvest-time being stinted in some land. Think over the contrast given in the text.

I. General distress. "The dearth was in all lands," *i. e.* all the lands then known to be peopled by the descendants of Noah. Their harvests had failed. Rain excessive, or drought prolonged, had ruined their crops. For several years there seems to have been disappointment. Not only did the husbandmen suffer, but those who could not toil. Dearth engenders disease, despair, death. See 2 Kings vi. 24—30, to what straits famine will reduce people. Even mothers consent together to eat their own offspring. In the lamentations of Jeremiah there is a description of the fearful consequences of famine, leading men to say, "Then was our skin black like an oven, because of the terrible famine." How painful must it be to have scanty platters and empty barns; for parents to have children clinging to the skirts of their garments, crying, "Give, oh, give bread," and to have none wherewith to satisfy them! We see the effect of famine on one family in the East. Jacob's sons "looked on one another, and were sad." Their looks were despairing. They had money, flocks, and herds, but no bread. They could not eat their money, and to have lived on their starving flocks alone would engender disease of frightful character. Many had not even flocks to fall back upon, and the dearth was in all lands. How men at such a time must have looked longingly at the heavens, and prayed that God would send them bread! Sometimes such seasons of trial are sent that men may be reminded of the dependence on God. To have a moral and spiritual dearth is worse than to have outward destitution. The spiritual is more important than the physical. A more terrible death than all is that where there is a lack of a knowledge of God and his love, and of hearing the word of the Lord.

II. Exceptional abundance. But for this plentifulness in Egypt the whole race might have perished. There were several reasons for the abundance in Egypt. 1. God arranged it by that wondrous overflowing of the Nile. A difference in the rising a few feet makes all the difference as to the crops. Even at this date, so do the crops of Egypt affect the markets of the world, that the rising of the Nile is watched, and the height attained telegraphed to all parts. God, at the period referred to, had given seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of dearth; but such had been the

previous abundance, owing to the overflow of the river, that in the terrible time of dearth there was abundance of bread in Egypt. 2. The foresight and energy of one man had led to the husbanding of resources and storing of excessive crops. 3. Divine revelation caused Joseph to act. He could not have known of the impending danger unless it had been revealed. He had faith in God when in prison, and maintained it when he became the governor of Egypt. Indeed that faith shone as brightly when he was the approved of Pharaoh as when he was the slave of Potiphar and the object of passion's hate. His faith was rewarded when he was able to save multitudes from starving. What a contrast is presented in the text! Dearth of many lands, abundance in one. Such contrasts are often seen. On one side of the ocean there may have been an abundant harvest, on the other side but scanty crops. The world is full of contrasts. Here is a wedding; there is a funeral. In one family is love, thoughtfulness, harmony, and in that—perhaps separated only by the thin partition of hasty builders—bickering, jealousy, and hastiness of temper. Here sobriety, providence, and religion reign; there nothing but indigence, drunkenness, and utter neglect of the claims of God. In one country is peace, activity in all its branches of industry, commercial confidence, progress in education and art, thoughtfulness for the untaught and criminal classes, and higher appreciation of the sacredness of life; in another depression, mistrust, plotting of adventurers, rule of the conscienceless, national faithlessness, and the spreading pall of desolation. Forceful is the contrast presented by nations under the influence of a simple Christianity and those enslaved by superstition. as Spain or Austria; or paralysed by fatalism, as Turkey and Asia Minor; or darkened by idolatry, as India, China, Africa, and some of the islands of the seas. And such contrasts are seen in individuals. There walks one whose soul has no light, no hope, no peace; here one who knows he is pardoned, and is sure of acceptance by Christ. At death what a contrast! See one dying shrinking, doubting, fearing, grasping at any straw of comfort; another rejoicing that he is soon to enter and tread the streets of the New Jerusalem. Let all be prepared for such a change. Seek Christ, who is the "Bread of life," the Saviour of our souls. Lack of appetite and numbness may come from excessive exhaustion. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, and be not like a lady who once said, "Sir, I have been so long without religion that I have, I fear, now no desire for it." If we come to Christ he will receive us readily. Joseph was glad to receive and help his brethren. So will Christ supply all our need out of the treasures of his rich grace. Remember, that if the need of other nations tested the charity of Egypt, so the need of souls is to test our earnestness. If we have found the riches in Christ, we are to seek to bless others. If little time remains to some of us in which to do much for Christ, let us act as those who, having much to write and little space, crowd the letters and words the closer. Let us be earnest as the husbandman, who, seeing winter coming apace, hastens in the few fine days remaining to garner his crops. Alas, many of our doings will have to stand useless, like earless, rotten sheaves, blackening dreary fields.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLII.

Ver. 1.—**Now when Jacob saw**—literally, *and Jacob saw*, i. e. perceived by the preparations of others for buying corn in Egypt (Lange), but more probably learnt by the report which others brought from Egypt (ver. 2)—**that there was corn**—שֶׁבֶר, either that which is broken, *e. g.* ground as in a mill, from שָׁבַר, to break in pieces, to shiver (Gesenius), or that which breaks forth, hence sprouts or germinates, from an unused root, שָׁבַר, to press out, to break forth (Fürst), is here employed to denote not simply grain, but a supply of it, *frumenti cumulus*, for sale and purchase. The LXX. render by πρᾶσις, and the Vulgate by *quod alimenta venderentur*—**in Egypt** (*vide* ch. xli. 54), **Jacob** (literally, *and Jacob*) **said unto his sons,**—using *verba non, ut multi volunt, increpantis, sed excitantis* (Rosenmüller)—**Why do ye look one upon another?**—*i. e.* in such a helpless and undecided manner (Keil), which, however, there is no need to regard as springing from a consciousness of guilt (Lange), the language fittingly depicting the aspect and attitude of those who are simply *consilii inopes* (Rosenmüller).

Ver. 2.—**And he said, Behold, I have heard**

(this does not imply that the rumour had not also reached Jacob's sons, but only that the proposal to visit Egypt did not originate with them) **that there is corn**—שֶׁבֶר, *ut supra*, σῖτος (LXX.), *triticum* (Vulgate)—**in Egypt: get you down thither.** That Jacob did not, like Abraham (ch. xii. 10) and Isaac (ch. xxvi. 2), propose to remove his family to Egypt, may be explained either by the length of the journey, which was too great for so large a household, or by the circumstance that the famine prevailed in Egypt as well as Canaan (Gerlach). That he intrusted his sons, and not his servants, with the mission, though perhaps dictated by a sense of its importance (Lawson), was clearly of Divine arrangement for the further accomplishment of the Divine plan concerning Joseph and his brethren. **And buy** (*i. e.* buy corn, the verb being a denominative from שֶׁבֶר, corn) **for us from thence.** From this it is apparent that the hitherto abundant flocks and herds of the patriarchal family had been greatly reduced by the long-continued and severe drought, thus requiring them to obtain food from Egypt, if either any portion of their flocks were to be saved, or themselves to escape starvation, as the patriarch explained to his sons. **That we may** (literally, *and we shall*) **live, and not die.**

Ver. 3.—**And Joseph's ten brethren went down**—either it was for safety that all the ten went, or because, the corn being sold to individuals, the quantity received would depend on their numbers (Lange)—**to buy corn**—the word for corn, בָּר, if not a primitive, like the Latin *far* (Fürst), may be derived from בָּרַר, to separate, sever, choose out, hence purify (Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Gesenius), and may describe grain as that which has been cleaned from chaff, as in Jer. iv. 11—**in** (literally, *from*, i. e. corn to be brought from) **Egypt.**

Ver. 4.—**But** (literally, *and*) **Benjamin, Joseph's brother** (*vide* ch. xxxv. 18), **Jacob sent not with his brethren.** Not because of his youth (Patrick, Lange), since he was now upwards of twenty years of age, but because he was Joseph's brother, and had taken Joseph's place in his father's affections (Lawson, Lange, Murphy, &c.), causing the old man to cherish him with tender solicitude. **For he said** (to, or within, himself, perhaps recalling the fate of Joseph), **Lest peradventure mischief befall him.** אָסוֹן, from אָסָה, to hurt (Gesenius, Fürst), and occurring only elsewhere in ver. 38, ch. xliv. 29, and Exod. xxi. 22, 23, denotes any sort of personal injury in general, and in particular here such mischance as might happen to a traveller.

Ver. 5.—**And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came**—literally, *in the midst of the comers;* not as being desirous to lose themselves in the multitudes, as if troubled by an alarming presentiment (Lange), which is forced and unnatural; but either as forming a part of a caravan of Canaanites (Lawson), or simply as arriving among others who came from the same necessity (Keil). **For the famine was in the land of Canaan.** The statements in this verse concerning the descent of Joseph's brethren to Egypt, and the prevalence of the famine in the land of Canaan, both of which have already been sufficiently announced (*vide* ver. 3; ch. xli. 57; xlii. 2), are neither useless repetitions nor proofs of different authorship, but simply the customary recapitulations which mark the commencement of a new paragraph or section of the history, viz., that in which Joseph's first interview with his brethren is described (cf. 'Quarry on Genesis,' pp. 556, 557).

Ver. 6.—**And Joseph was the governor over the land.** The word שַׁלִּיט, from שָׁלַט, to rule, describes one invested with despotic authority, or a sultan (Gesenius), in which character the early Shemites appear to have regarded Joseph (Keil). It is probably the same idea which recurs in the name Salatis, which, according to Manetho, belonged to the first of the shepherd kings (Josephus, 'Contra Apionem,' i. 14). Occurring nowhere else in the Pentateuch, it reappears in the later writings of Eccles. (vii. 10; x. 5), Ezra (iv. 20; vii. 24), Dan. (ii. 15; v. 29), which, however, need not suggest an exilian or post-exilian authorship, but may be explained by the fact that the root is found equally in the Arabic and Aramæan dialects (Keil). **And he it was that sold to all the people of the land.** Not conducted the retail corn trade (Tuch, Oort, Kuenen), which was assigned to subordinates (ver. 25; ch. xliv. 1), but presided over the general market of the kingdom (Murphy), probably fixing the price at which the grain should be sold, determining the quantities to be allowed to purchasers, and examining the companies of foreigners who came to buy (Rosenmüller, Hävernick, Lange, Gerlach). **And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.** And so fulfilled his early dream in Shechem (ch. xxxvii. 7, 8).

Ver. 7.—**And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but** (literally, *and*) **made himself strange unto them.** The root נָכַר, to be marked, signed, by indentation, hence to be foreign (Fürst), or simply to be strange (Gesenius), in the Hiphil signifies to press strongly into a thing (Fürst), to look at a thing as strange (Gesenius), or to recognise, and in the Hithpael has the sense of representing one's self as strange, *i. e.* of feigning

one's self to be a foreigner. **And spake roughly unto them**—literally, *spake hard things unto them;* not from a feeling of revenge which still struggled in his breast with his brotherly affection (Kurtz), or in a spirit of duplicity (Kalisch), but in order to get at their hearts, and discover the exact state of mind in which they then were with regard to himself and Benjamin, whose absence it is apparent had arrested his attention, and perhaps roused his suspicions (Keil, Murphy, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **And he said unto them,**—speaking through an interpreter (ver. 23)—**Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan** (adding, as if they feared Joseph's suspicions, and wished to deprecate his anger) **to buy food** (*i. e.* corn for food).

Ver. 8.—**And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.** The lapse of time since the tragedy of Dothan, twenty years before, the high position occupied by Joseph, the Egyptian manners he had by this time assumed, and the strange tongue in which he conversed with them, all conspired to prevent Jacob's sons from recognising their younger brother; while the facts that Joseph's brethren were all grown men when he had last looked upon them, that he was quite familiar with their appearances, and that he perfectly understood their speech, would account for his almost instantaneous detection of them.

Ver. 9.—**And Joseph remembered** (*i. e.* the sight of his brethren prostrating themselves before him recalled to his mind) **the dreams which he dreamed** (or had dreamed) **of them** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 5) **and said unto them, Ye are spies** (literally, *ye are spying,* or going about, so as to find out, the verb רָגַל signifying to move the feet); **to see the nakedness of the land**—not its present impoverishment from the famine (Murphy), but its unprotected and unfortified state (Keil). Cf. *urbs nuda præsidio* (Cic., 'Att.,' vii. 13); *murus nudatus defensoribus* (Cæs., 'Bell. Gall.,' ii. 6); τεῖχος ἐγυμνώθη (Homer, 'Iliad,' xii. 399)—**ye are come.** The Egyptians were characteristically distrustful of strangers,—*Ægyptii præ aliis gentibus diffidere solebant peregrinis* (Rosenmüller),—whom they prevented, when possible, from penetrating into the interior of their country (Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. p. 328, ed. 1878). In particular Joseph's suspicion of his Canaanitish brethren was perfectly natural, since Egypt was peculiarly open to attacks from Palestine (Herodotus, iii. 5).

Vers. 10—12.—**And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.** "They were not filled with resentment at the imputation" cast upon them by Joseph; "or, if they were angry, their pride was swallowed up by fear" (Lawson). **We are all one man's sons; we are true men,** —*i. e.* upright, honest, *viri bonæ fidei* (Rosenmüller), rather than εἰρηνικοί (LXX.), *pacifici* (Vulgate)—**thy servants are no spies.** It was altogether improbable that one man should send ten sons at the same time and to the same place on the perilous business of a spy, hence the simple mention of the fact that they were ten brethren was sufficient to establish their sincerity. Yet Joseph affected still to doubt them. **And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come**—assuming a harsh and almost violent demeanour not out of heartless cruelty (Kalisch), but in order to hide the growing weakness of his heart (Candlish).

Ver. 13.—**And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest**—literally, *the little one* (cf. ch. ix. 24) —is **this day with our father, and one**—literally, *the one,* i. e. the other one, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος (LXX.)—is **not**—*i. e.* is dead (cf. ch. v. 24; xxxvii. 30)—in which statement have been seen a sufficient proof that Joseph's brethren had not yet truly repented of their cruelty towards him (Keil); an evidence that time had assuaged all their bitter feelings, both of exasperation against Joseph and of remorse for their unbrotherly conduct (Murphy); a suppression of the truth (Wordsworth), if not a direct falsehood (Lawson), since they wished it to be understood that their younger brother was dead, while of that they had no evidence beyond their own cunningly-invented lie (ch. xxxvii. 20) and their own probable surmisings. But in point of fact the inference was natural and reasonable that Joseph was no more, since twenty years had elapsed without any tidings of his welfare, and there was no absolute necessity requiring them to explain to the Egyptian governor all the particulars of their early life. Yet the circumstance that their assertion regarding himself was incorrect may have tended to awaken his suspicions concerning Benjamin.

Vers. 14—16.—**And Joseph said unto them** (betraying his excitement in his language), **That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies.** But Joseph knew by this time that they were not spies. Hence his persistent accusation of them, which to the brothers must have seemed despotic and tyrannical, and which cannot be referred to malevolence or revenge, must be explained by a desire on the part of Joseph to bring his brothers to a right state of mind. **Hereby** (or in this) **ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh**—literally, *life of Pharaoh!* An Egyptian oath (LXX., Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Lange), in using which Joseph was not without blame, *aliquid esse fateor quod merito culpetur* (Calvin) though

by some (Ainsworth, Wordsworth, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary') the expression is regarded simply as a strong asseveration (cf. 1 Sam. i. 26; xvii. 55)—**ye shall not go forth hence** (literally, *life of Pharaoh! if ye go from this*. The language is elliptical, meaning either, May Pharaoh perish if ye escape from punishment as spies, unless, &c.; or, As surely as Pharaoh lives, may retribution fall on me if ye go from this place) **except your youngest brother come hither.** The condition, which must have appeared extremely frivolous to Joseph's brethren, was clearly designed to ascertain the truth about Benjamin. **Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye** (*i. e.* the rest of you) **shall be kept in prison** (literally, *shall be put in bonds*), **that your words may be proved** (literally, *and your words shall be proved*), **whether** there be any **truth in you; or else** (literally, *and if not*) **by the life of Pharaoh surely ye** are **spies**—literally (*sc.* I swear), *that ye are spies*.

Ver. 17.—**And he put them all together into ward** (literally, *and he assembled them into prison*) **three days.** Ostensibly in consequence of their unwillingness to agree to his proposal, but in reality to give them an experience of the suffering which they had inflicted on him, their brother, and so to awaken in their hearts a feeling of repentance. Yet the clemency of Joseph appears in this, that whereas he had lain three long years in prison as the result of their inhumanity towards him, he only inflicts on them a confinement of three days.

Vers. 18—20.—**And Joseph** (whose bowels of mercy were already yearning towards them) **said unto them the third day, This do, and live;**—*i. e.* this do that ye may live (*vide* Gesenius, 'Grammar,' § 130, 2; Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 348*b*)—**for I fear God**—literally, *the Elohim I fear;* the term Elohim being employed, since to have said Jehovah would have been to divulge, if not his Hebrew origin, at least his acquaintance with the Hebrew faith (Hengstenberg). At the same time its use would arrest them more than the preceding adjuration, By the life of Pharaoh! and, whether or not it implied that the true God was not yet unknown in Egypt (Murphy), was clearly designed to show that he was a religious and conscientious person, who would on no account condemn them on mere suspicion (Lange). **If ye be true** men, **let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison.** Joseph's first proposal, that one should go for Benjamin while nine remained as hostages for their good faith, is now reversed, and only one is required to be detained while the other nine return. If the severity of the first proposal filled them with consternation, the singular clemency of the second could not fail to impress them. Not only were the nine to be released, but their original demand for grain to carry home to Palestine was to be complied with, the grand vizier adding, to their undoubted amazement, *As for the rest of you*, **go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses.** "How differently had they acted towards their brother, whom they had intended to leave in the pit to starve" (Keil). The Egyptian governor feels compassion for their famishing households, only he will not abandon his proposition that they must return with Benjamin. **But bring your youngest brother unto me**—or, more emphatically, and your brother, the little one, ye shall cause to come to me. That Joseph should have insisted on this stipulation, which he must have known would cause his aged father much anxiety and deep distress, is not to be explained as "almost designed" by Joseph as a chastisement on Jacob for his undue predilection in favour of Benjamin (Kalisch), but must be ascribed either to the intensity of his longing to see his brother (Murphy), or to a desire on his part to ascertain how his brethren were affected towards Benjamin (Lawson), or to a secret belief that the best mode of persuading his father to go down to him in Egypt was to bring Benjamin thither ('Speaker's Commentary'), or to an inward conviction that the temporary concern which Benjamin's absence might inflict on Jacob would be more than compensated for by the ultimate good which would thereby be secured to the whole family (Kurtz), or to the fact that God, under whose guidance throughout he acted, was unconsciously leading him in such a way as to secure the fulfilment of his dreams, which required the presence of both Benjamin and Jacob in Egypt (Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). The reason which Joseph himself gave to his brethren was that Benjamin's presence was indispensable as a corroboration of their veracity. **So** (literally, *and*) **shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die** (the death due to spies). **And they did so**—*i. e.* they consented to Joseph's proposal.

Ver. 21.—**And they said one to another** (Joseph's treatment of them beginning by this time to produce its appropriate and designed result by recalling them to a sense of their former guilt), **We are verily guilty**—"this is the only acknowledgment of sin in the Book of Genesis" (Inglis)—**concerning our brother.** They had been guilty of many sins, but the special iniquity of which their reception by the Egyptian governor had reminded them was that which some twenty years before they had perpetrated against their own brother. Indeed the accusation preferred against them that they were spies, the apparent unwillingness of the viceroy to

listen to their request for food, and their subsequent incarceration, though innocent of any offence, were all calculated to recall to their recollection successive steps in their inhuman treatment of Joseph. **In that** (or because) **we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us** (literally, *in his beseeching of us*, an incident which the narrator omits to mention, but which the guilty consciences of the brethren remember), **and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.** The retributive character of their sufferings, which they cannot fail to perceive, they endeavour to express by employing the same word, צָרָה, to describe Joseph's anguish and their distress.

Ver. 22.—**And Reuben**—who had not consented to, but had been altogether unable to prevent, the wickedness of his brethren (ch. xxxvii. 22, 29)—**answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child** (or lad); **and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required**—literally, *and also his blood, behold it is required*. This was in accordance with the Noachic law against bloodshed (ch. ix. 5), with which it is apparent that Jacob's sons were acquainted.

Ver. 23.—**And they knew not** (while they talked in what they imagined to be a foreign dialect to the Egyptian viceroy) **that Joseph understood** them;—literally, *heard* (so as to understand what was said)—**for he spake unto them by an interpreter**—literally, *for the interpreter* (הַמֵּלִיץ, the hiph. part., with the art., of לִיץ, to speak barbarously, in the hiph. to act as an interpreter), *i. e.* the official Court interpreter, ἑρμηνευτής (LXX.), *was between them*.

Ver. 24.—**And he turned himself about from them** (in order to hide his emotion), **and wept** (as he reflected on the wonderful leadings of Divine providence, and beheld the pitiful distress of his brethren); **and returned to them again** (having previously withdrawn from them a space), **and communed with them** (probably about the one of them that should remain behind), **and took from them**—by a rough act of authority, since they either could not or would not settle among themselves who should be the prisoner (Candlish)—**Simeon,**—passing by Reuben not because he was the firstborn (Tuch, Lengerke), but because he was comparatively guiltless (Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Candlish, and expositors generally), and selecting Simeon either as the eldest of the guilty ones (Aben Ezra, Keil, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth, Alford, and others), or as the chief instigator of the sale of Joseph (Philo, Rosenmüller, Fürst, Kalisch, Gerlach, Lawson, *et alii*)—**and bound him before their eyes**—thus forcibly recalling to their minds what they had done to him (Wordsworth), and perhaps hoping to incite them, through pity for Simeon, to return the more speedily with Benjamin (Lawson).

Ver. 25.—**Then** (literally, *and*) **Joseph commanded to fill**—literally, *commanded, and they* (i. e. Joseph's men) *filled*—**their sacks** (rather, vessels or receptacles, כְּלִי) **with corn, and to restore every man's money** (literally, *their pieces of silver, each*) **into his sack,**—שַׂק, *saccus*, σάκος, σάκκος, sack (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 34). Joseph "feels it impossible to bargain with his father and his brethren for bread" (Baumgarten)—**and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he** (literally, *it was done*) **unto them.**

Ver. 26.—**And they laded their asses with the corn** (literally, *put their grain upon their asses*), **and departed** (or went) **thence.**

Ver. 27.—**And as one of them opened his sack**—literally, *and the one opened his sack*, i. e. they did not all open their sacks on the homeward journey, although afterwards, in reporting the circumstance to Joseph, they represent themselves as having done so (ch. xliii. 21); but only one at the wayside inn, and the rest on reaching home (ver. 35; *vide infra*, ch. xliii. 21)—**to give his ass provender in the inn** (the מָלוֹן, from לִין, to pass the night, was not an inn in the modern sense of the term, but simply a halting-place or camping station where travellers were wont to lodge, without finding for themselves or animals any other food than they carried with them), **he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth**—literally, *in the opening of his amtachath*, אַמְתַּחַת, from מָתַח, to spread out, an old word for a sack (ch. xliii. 18, 21, 22), here used synonymously with שַׂק, from which it would seem that the travellers carried two sorts of bags, one for the corn called כְּלִי (ver. 25), and another for the asses' provender called אַמְתַּחַת. It was in the latter that the money had been placed.

Ver. 28.—**And he** (*i. e.* the one who had opened his sack) **said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack** (*amtachath*): **and their heart failed** them (literally, *went forth;* as it were, leapt into their mouths through sudden apprehension), **and they were afraid, saying one to another** (literally, *they trembled each one to his brother*, a *constructio pregnans* for they turned trembling towards one another, saying), **What is this that God hath done unto us?** Elohim is used, and not Jehovah, because the speakers simply desire to characterise the circumstance as supernatural.

Vers. 29—34.—**And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan,**

and told him all that befell unto them (literally, *all the things happening to them*, the participle being construed with the accusative); **saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us** (literally, *spake the man, lord of the country, with us harsh things*, the order and arrangement of the words indicating the strong feeling which their treatment in Egypt had excited), **and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: we be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan** (*vide* vers. 11, 13). **And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone.** It is observable that they do not mention Joseph's first proposal, probably because of Joseph's subsequent kindness; neither do they intimate the fact that Simeon was bound, perhaps through a desire to soften the blow as much as possible for their venerable parent. **And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land** (cf. ch. xxxiv. 10).

Ver. 35.—**And it came to pass as they emptied** (literally, *they emptying*) **their sacks, that** (literally, *and*), **behold, every man's bundle of money** (or silver) **was in his sack: and when** (literally, *and*) **both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they** (literally, *and they*) **were afraid.**

Ver. 36.—**And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved** (or are ye bereaving) **of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not** (Jacob appears to suspect that in some way or another his sons had been responsible for Joseph's disappearance as well as Simeon's), **and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me**—literally, *upon me, as an heavy burden, which I must bear alone.*

Ver. 37.—**And Reuben spake unto his father, saying** (Reuben was probably actuated by an ardent brotherly affection, which prompted him to endeavour to recover Simeon, as formerly he had sought to deliver Joseph), **Slay my two sons,—as Reuben had four sons** (ch. xlvi. 9), he must be understood as meaning two of my sons (Ainsworth, Murphy), either the two then present (Junius) or the two oldest (Mercerus)—**if I bring him** (*i. e.* Benjamin) **not to thee.** Reuben's proposal, though in one sense "the greatest and dearest offer that a son could make to a father" (Keil), was either only a sample of strong rhetoric (like Joseph's "By the life of Pharaoh!)" designed to assure his father of the impossibility of failure (Lawson, Candlish, Inglis), and of the fact that neither he nor his brethren entertained any injurious designs against Benjamin (Calvin); or, if seriously made, was not only inconsiderate and rash, spoken in the heat of the moment (Kurtz), but sinful and unnatural (Ainsworth), *plusquam barbarum* (Calvin), and absolutely worthless besides, as what consolation would it be to Jacob to add to the loss of a son the murder of his grandchildren? (Calvin, Willet). **Deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.** Reuben might have learned to avoid strong asseverations on this point. "It was his wish to bring Joseph home to his father, and yet he could not persuade his brethren to comply with his intentions. It was his desire to bring Simeon safe to his father, and yet he was compelled to leave him in Egypt" (Lawson).

Ver. 38.—**And he** (*i. e.* Jacob) **said, My son shall not go down with you;**—not because he could not trust Reuben after the sin described in ch. xxxv. 22 (Wordsworth), or because he could not assent to Reuben's proposal (Ainsworth), but because of what is next stated—**for his brother** (*i. e.* by the same mother, viz., Joseph) **is dead** (cf. ver. 13; xxxvii. 33; xliv. 28), **and he is left alone:**—*i. e.* he alone (of Rachel's children) is left as a survivor—**if mischief befall him** (literally, *and mischief shall befall him*) **by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye** (literally, *and ye shall*) **bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave**—*Sheol* (cf. ch. xxxvii. 35).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—38.—*The first visit of Joseph's brethren to Egypt.* I. THE JOURNEY TO EGYPT (vers. 1—5). 1. *The famishing household.* Although Canaan was the land of promise, and the family of Jacob the Church of God, yet neither was the one nor the other exempted from the pressure of that heavy famine which had fallen on all surrounding lands and peoples. It is not God's intention that his people should escape participating in the ills of life. Besides enabling them, collectively and individually, to sympathise with their fellow-men, it is a means under God of advancing their own sanctification, and oftentimes as well of furthering the purposes of God concerning both the world and the Church. 2. *The perplexed brethren.* Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and the rest of them were manifestly at their wits' end what

to do to keep themselves from starving. If the thought of Egypt had anything to do with their listlessness and inactivity, it may remind us how dangerous it is to sin, 'the memory of past transgressions having an uncomfortable habit of springing up at unexpected moments, like grim and shaggy lions in the path; if their spiritless dejection was in no way connected with the Dothan tragedy, it shows that saints are not necessarily a whit more talented or fertile in expedient than their ungodly neighbours, and are frequently as helpless as the rest of them in the face of sudden and overwhelming calamities. Grace, though it gives goodness, does not guarantee greatness. 3. *The parental exhortation.* Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, and forthwith proposed that his sons should undertake a journey thither to fetch a supply for their necessities, at the same time prefacing his sound advice with a word of brisk reproof at their want of push in the face of news so full of comfort and hope as that grain might be had for the purchase. Jacob clearly discerned that, while it was right in them to look to God for help in their distress, it was also expected of them by God that they should help themselves. Although God promises to give his people bread, he does not undertake to relieve them of all trouble in the matter. If he provides corn in Egypt, he expects men to go for it; and it is a mark of sound sense, if it is not a sign of grace, when men are able to detect in Egypt providential supplies for their necessities. 4. *The important mission.* Concerning which may be noticed—(1) The number of the travellers: Joseph's ten brethren. Whether it was for safety to themselves, or for the advantage of the household to enable them to return with larger supplies, it was clearly a wise providential arrangement that the ten brethren who had sinned against the son of Rachel should go down to Egypt. (2) The destination of the travellers: Egypt. In all probability Egypt was the last place that they would ever have thought of going to. It is scarcely likely that they had quite forgotten Joseph. Whether or not they suspected that Joseph might yet be alive, they knew that he had gone to Egypt as a slave. And now they were themselves upon the way to the scene of Joseph's captivity. If Joseph's brethren were thoughtful men at all, they must have had their reflections by the way. (3) The object of the travellers: to buy corn. This at least was a lawful and an honourable purpose, which is more than could be said of some of their previous adventures. But God's people, whether they abide in Canaan or go to Egypt, should follow peace with, and provide things honest in the sight of, all men. 5. *The paternal reservation.* "But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren." If Jacob's reason for detaining Benjamin was anxiety for himself, who was now an old man, and afraid to lose the lad who served him as the son of his old age, it may remind us of the feebleness and helplessness of age, and of the duty of the young to comfort and assist the old. If it was anxiety for Benjamin, whom he feared to expose to the fate of Joseph, it is a beautiful example of the tenderness and strength of a father's love, and may well suggest the duty of rewarding that love with true filial affection. If it was anxiety for his ten sons, lest in the case of Benjamin they should repeat the crime which they had perpetrated against Joseph, it shows how difficult it is to remove from the minds of others, even of those who have the most disposition to judge us with charity, unfavourable impressions concerning ourselves when once they have been formed. There is good reason for believing that a change had passed upon the characters of Joseph's brethren since the dark deed at Dothan. Yet the old man was afraid to trust them. If once by our wickedness we forfeit the confidence of our fellow-men, these are not to be blamed if in future they fail to trust our integrity and honour.

II. THE INTERVIEW WITH THE GOVERNOR (vers. 6—25). 1. *Humble homage to the governor.* Arriving in Egypt, the sons of Jacob were conducted to the presence of the viceroy, and they "bowed down before him with their faces." Such respectful behaviour was due to the majesty of him in whose presence they stood (Rom. xiii. 7), and was admirably fitted to the character in which they came. They who have a suit to press, at an earthly or a heavenly throne, should be "clothed with humility." 2. *Non-recognition of the governor.* The moment Joseph looked upon the Hebrew strangers he knew them to be his brethren. But they entirely failed to discern him; because (1) he spoke like a foreigner—"an interpreter was between them;" (2) he dressed like an Egyptian—he wore a garment of byssus, like an

Egyptian priest (ch. xli. 42); (3) he swore like a courtier—"By the life of Pharaoh," which certainly his brethren knew was not the language of Canaan. Yet, if they had been as anxious to see their lost brother as he had been to see them (it is just possible Joseph may have been on the outlook for his brethren, expecting them to arrive with every caravan that came from Canaan), not even these disguises would have concealed his identity. 3. *Harsh treatment by the governor.* (1) The nature of it. He spoke to them roughly, he questioned them straitly, he accused them directly, he proved them severely, he imprisoned them closely. (2) The reason of it. Scarcely revenge; ostensibly to test their sincerity; but really to conceal his own identity, in order to secure time for thought how to act, and, if possible, to penetrate into their characters. (3) The mitigation of it. At the end of three days he somewhat relaxed his proposition, asking them to leave only one of their brethren instead of nine, viz., Simeon, whom he took and bound before their eyes. 4. *Bitter grief before the governor.* (1) The remembrance of their sin. As a result of their rough handling by the Egyptian vizier, they began to think of Joseph and their early sin against him, which almost every step in their present experience vividly recalled. It is good when affliction brings sin to mind. (2) The confession of their guilt. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." It is better when tribulation leads to an acknowledgment of ill desert. (3) The recognition of their punishment. They saw the hand of God pursuing them for their wickedness, and requiting them, as they imagined, for Joseph's blood. It is best when God's retributive dispensations make the soul sensitive and humble. 5. *Unexpected kindness from the governor.* Though he did not depart from his original demand that they should bring down Benjamin, and though he insisted on retaining Simeon as a hostage for their obedience, he yet granted their request for corn, and, unknown to them as yet, caused their money to be restored to their sacks. So Christ often deals with penitents; first blows and buffetings, then benefits and blessings.

III. The return to Canaan (vers. 26—38). 1. *The startling discovery.* Resting for the night at a wayside khan, or lodging-place, one of the brethren, having had occasion to give his beast a little provender, opened out his sack, and lo! the silver money he had paid for his corn was in its mouth. The same discovery was made by the rest on reaching Hebron. The instruction which Joseph gave his steward had not been heard by them, and they had penetration to see how the circumstance might be turned to their disadvantage. They were innocent of any crime in this matter; but how were they to explain it to the austere and impenetrable man who sat upon the throne of Egypt? "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all." The best that can be said of them in this connection is that they had piety enough to see the hand of God in the untoward affair. 2. *The faithful report.* On arriving at Hebron, they related to their father Jacob all that had befallen them in Egypt, beginning with the rough reception they had gotten from the governor, and ending with the startling discovery they had just made; in all which there was at least a symptom of improvement in the characters of those ten brethren. Here was none of the concealment and lying that marked them at an earlier stage in their history, as when they palmed off upon their aged parent the clever story of the wild beast and the bloody coat to account for Joseph's disappearance. They presented themselves as before without their brother, but this time they told the truth: Simeon was a hostage in Egypt for the bringing down of Benjamin. 3. *The parental sorrow.* In the anguish of the moment Jacob committed three mistakes. (1) About his sons who had returned from Egypt, whom he was manifestly blaming for the loss both of Simeon and Joseph,—"Me ye are bereaving,"—which should lead us to beware of passing hasty judgments upon the characters of others, of those even whom we may think we know best. (2) About the two who were detained in Egypt, Joseph and Simeon, the first of whom he thought he knew was already dead, and the second of whom he feared had shared the same fate; whereas Joseph was in honour in Egypt, and Simeon was only languishing in temporary confinement. (3) About himself and Benjamin, that their separation would but be the beginning of sorrow for them both, whereas it was to be the means of leading both to happiness and honour. So God's providences are often misinterpreted by his saints. Contrast with Jacob's exclamation that of Paul in Rom. viii. 28. 4. *The filial security.* Reuben offers to

undertake the charge of Benjamin, and to be responsible for his safe-conduct to Egypt and back again, and in so far the act of Reuben was generous and kindly towards both Jacob and Benjamin; but his proposal that Jacob should slay two of his sons if he failed to deliver Benjamin was rash, unnatural, and sinful, and accordingly was at once rejected by the patriarch.

See in this interesting narrative—1. The fact of an overruling providence, exemplified in God's bringing Joseph's brethren to Egypt. 2. The strength of human affection, illustrated by Joseph's emotion in presence of his brethren, and Jacob's pathetic fondness for Benjamin. 3. The power of a guilty conscience, exhibited in the mutual recriminations of the brethren with reference to the sale of Joseph. 4. The beneficial influence of the discipline of life, as portrayed in the good effects produced by Joseph's rough handling of his brethren. 5. The short-sightedness of sense and reason, as seen in Jacob's lamentation, "All these things are against me," while, on the contrary, all things were working together for his good.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xlii.—*God's trials of his people.* The trial of Joseph is over. Now comes the trial of his brethren and of Jacob. The Spirit of God is at work in all their hearts. True men they were and yet sinful men. Before they can be made partakers of the blessing of Joseph they must pass through the fire. He who is appointed minister of grace to them is the instrument of their trials. Notice—

I. The trial is one of CONSCIENCE. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." "His blood is required." Face to face with one whom they supposed to be a heathen man, they are reproved. They have to tell facts which smite them with inward reproach.

II. The trial is one of HEART. To leave Simeon behind, to be afraid both for him and for themselves and for Benjamin. To be keenly perplexed and agonised for their old father. To be deeply wounded in the remembrance of their brother Joseph's anguish of soul and helpless cries for pity.

III. The trial is one of FAITH. "What is this that God hath done unto us?" In the midst of all the roughness, and the fear, and the trouble there is still the feeling that they are being dealt with in some mysterious way by God himself, and there is a mingling of faith with their fear. Reuben again represents the better element in their character, and as they follow him they are led into peace. Joseph's smile is the smile of the loving heart which sometimes dissembles that it may reveal itself the more fully when the opportunity comes. He wept behind their backs. He was hiding the intensest love and the most abundant forgiveness and pitifulness, while he appeared to be a rough enemy. Still there were signs mingled with the harsh treatment that it was not all harsh. The sacks were filled with corn, and the money was returned. A deeper faith would have penetrated the secret. But those that have to be led from the feeble faith to the strong, have to be tried with appearances that seem, as Jacob said, "*all against*" them. How often the believer says, "All these things are against me," when he is already close upon that very stream of events which will carry him out of his distress into the midst of plenty, peace, and the joy of a healed heart in its recovered blessedness. Jacob poured out his natural fears and complaints, yet how little they were founded on truth. The son for whom he mourned yet lived and closed his eyes, and his gray hairs went to the grave in peace.—R.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Man's want and God's provision.* The famine was part of God's plan to carry out his promise to Abraham (Gen. xv. 13, 14). But it is not merely a fact in the historical preparation for what he was bringing to pass; a link in the chain of events leading on to Christ. We must look upon it as part of a series of types foreshadowing gospel truths. The famine was a step towards the promised possession, and has its counterpart in the work of the Holy Spirit. It represents the spiritual want of man; conviction of sin (John xvi. 8; cf. Rom. vii. 9), leading to know the power of Christ's work (Matt. xviii. 11).

I. The first step is CONSCIOUSNESS OF FAMINE; that a man's life is more than meat;

more than a supply of bodily wants. It is realising that he has wants beyond the present life; that in living for time he has been following a shadow. This knowledge is not natural to us. Bodily hunger soon makes itself felt, but the soul's need does not; and until it is known, the man may be "poor and blind and naked," and yet suppose that he is "rich and increased with goods."

II. WE CANNOT OF OURSELVES SUPPLY THAT WANT. Gradually we learn how great it is. We want to still the accusing voice of conscience; to find a plea that shall avail in judgment; to see clearly the way of life that we may not err therein. In vain we look one on another, seeking comfort in the good opinion of men, in their testimony to our upright life. In vain we try to satisfy ourselves, by promises to do better, or by offerings of our substance or of our work. In vain is it to seek rest in unbelief, or in the persuasion that in some way all will be right. The soul cannot thus find peace. There is a voice which at times will make itself heard—"all have sinned"—thou hast sinned.

III. GOD HAS PROVIDED BREAD. "I have heard that there is corn in Egypt" (cf. Rom. x. 18), answers to the gospel telling of the bread of life. As to this we mark—1. It was provided before the want arose (1 Pet. i. 20; Rev. xiii. 8). The gospel tells us of what has already been done, not of a gift to come into existence on certain conditions. The ransom of our souls has been paid. We have to believe and take (Rev. xxii. 17). 2. *How faith works.* They must go for that food which was ready for them. To take the bread of life must be a real earnest act, not a listless assent. The manna which was to be gathered, the brazen serpent to which the sick were to look, the command to the impotent "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," all show that it is not enough merely to wish, there must be the effort of faith (cf. 1 Thess. i. 3). This is a law of the spiritual kingdom. As natural laws regulate results within their domain, so spiritual results must be sought in accordance with spiritual laws. 3. *It is our Brother* who has made provision for us. This is our confidence. He waits to reveal himself when in humility and emptiness we come to him, and to give us plenty (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22).—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Vers. 1, 2.—**And the famine was sore** (literally, *was heavy*) **in the land** (*sc.* of Canaan). **And it came to pass** (how long after the return of Joseph's brethren cannot be determined, as the quantity of grain they brought or the number that partook of it cannot possibly be estimated; but it may be reasonably inferred that several months had elapsed since their arrival at Hebron), **when they had eaten up**—literally, *had finished to eat up*, i. e. not nearly (Mercerus, Bush), but entirely consumed—**the corn which they had brought out of Egypt,**—it is probable that only Jacob's family partook of the Egyptian corn, the slaves supporting themselves on roots, vegetables, and milk (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Gerlach)—**their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.** What they could buy would be little in proportion to their needs.

Ver. 3.—**And Judah spake unto him, saying,**—Judah now becomes the spokesman, either because Reuben's entreaty had been rejected, and Levi, who followed Reuben and Simeon in respect of age, had forfeited his father's confidence though his treachery to the Shechemites (Keil, Murphy); or because he could speak to his father with greater freedom, having a freer conscience than the rest (Lange); or because he was a man possessed of greater prudence and ability than the rest (Lawson), if indeed the suggestion is not correct that they all endeavoured to persuade their father, though Judah's eloquence alone is recorded (Calvin)—**the man** (*i. e.* the Egyptian viceroy) **did solemnly protest** (literally, *protesting did protest*, i. e. did earnestly protest) **unto us, saying,**—with an oath which is not here repeated (ch. xlii. 15)—**Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.**

Vers. 4, 5.—**If thou wilt send**—literally, *if thou art sending*, i. e. if thou art agreeable to send (cf. ch. xxiv. 42, 49; Judges vi. 36)—**our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: but** (literally, *and*) **if thou wilt not send** him (a similar form of expression to the above, the two words יֵשׁ, being, and אֵין, not being, including the substantive verb, and being conjoined with a participle for the finite verb), **we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.** Judah's peremptory language receives sufficient justification

from the fact that he believed the Egyptian governor to be in thorough earnest when he declared that without Benjamin they should sue a second time in vain.

Ver. 6.—**And Israel said,**—this is the second time that Jacob is so designated in the history of Joseph, the first time being in ch. xxxvii., which recites the sad account of Joseph's disappearance from the family circle. The recurrence of what may eventually prove another breach in the theocratic family is probably the circumstance that revives the name Israel, which besides seems to prevail throughout the chapter (*vide* vers. 8, 11)—**Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?**—literally, *whether yet to you a brother* (sc. there was).

Ver. 7.—**And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye** another **brother?** Though not appearing in the preceding narrative of the historian (ch. xlii. 13, 32), it must yet be held as accurate that the information given to Joseph about Jacob and Benjamin was supplied in answer to direct inquiries, since Judah afterwards gives the same account of it (ch. xliv. 19) when pleading before Joseph in behalf of Benjamin. **And we told him according to the tenor of these words**—literally, *according to these words*, i. e. either in conformity to his questions (Ainsworth, Rosenmüller, Keil), *κατὰ τὴν ἐπερώτησιν ταύτην* (LXX.), *juxta id quod fuerat sciscitatus* (Vulgate), or like those words we have told thee (Kalisch). **Could we certainly know** (literally, *knowing could we know*) **that he would say, Bring your brother down?**

Vers. 8—10.—**And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me** (Benjamin, though styled a lad, must have been at this time upwards of twenty years of age), **and we will arise and go; that we may** (literally, *and we shall*) **live, and not die, both we, and thou,** and **also our little ones. I will be surety for him** (the verb conveys the idea of changing places with another); **of my hand shalt thou require him** (*vide* ch. ix. 5): **if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee,**—the words are even more emphatic than those of Reuben (ch. xlii. 37)—**then let me bear the blame for ever**—literally, *and I shall be a sinner* (i. e. liable to punishment as a sinner) *against thee all the days* (sc. of my life). The thought is elliptical. Judah means that if he does not return with Benjamin he shall both have failed in his promise and be guilty of a dire transgression against his father (cf. 1 Kings i. 21). **For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time**—literally, *these two times*. The nobility of character which shines out so conspicuously in Judah's language is afterwards signally illustrated in his pathetic pleading before Joseph, and goes far to countenance the suggestion that a change must have taken place in his inner life since the incidents recorded of him in chs. xxxvii. and xxxviii.

Ver. 11.—**And their father Israel said unto them, If** it must be **so now** (literally, *if so now*), **do this; take of the best fruits in the land** (literally, *of the song of the land*, *i. e.* of its choicest and most praised productions) **in your vessels, and carry down the man a present.** That Jacob could propose to send a handsome present of rich fruits to the Egyptian viceroy has been regarded as inconsistent with the prevalence of a famine in the land of Canaan for over two or three years (Bohlen); but (1) the failure of the cereal crops does not necessarily imply a like absence of fruit, and (2) it does not follow that, though Jacob selected the under-mentioned articles for his gift, they existed in abundance, while (3) if the fruit harvest was small, an offering such as is here described would only be all the more luxuriant and valuable on that account (Kurtz, Kalisch). **A little balm,**—balsam (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 25) —**and a little honey,**—דְּבַשׁ, grape honey, called by the Arabians *dibs*, and the Persians *dushab*, was prepared by boiling down must or new wine to a third or half; hence called by the Greeks ἕψημα, and by the Romans *sapa, defrutum*. It is still imported into Egypt from the district of Hebron. That it was not the honey of bees, μέλι (LXX.), *mel* (Vulgate), is rendered probable by the circumstance that Egypt abounds in this excellent production of nature (*vide* Michaelis, 'Suppl.,' p. 391)—**spices, and myrrh** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 25), **nuts,**—בָּטְנִים, an oblong species of nut, so called from its being flat on one side and bellying out on the other (the *pistacia vera* of Linnæus), having an oily kernel which is most palatable to Orientals (*vide* Kalisch *in loco*)—**and almonds.** The שָׁקֵד or almond tree, so called because of all trees it is the first to arouse from the sleep of winter, the root being שָׁקַד, to be sleepless, (Gesenius), does not seem to have been indigenous in Egypt, while it flourishes in Syria and Palestine (Kalisch).

Ver. 12—**And take double money** (literally, *money of a second*, i. e. of the same, *amount*; not twice as much as the first time, but simply as much as the first time) **in your hand; and the money that was brought again** (or returned) **in the mouth of your sacks, carry** it **again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight** (literally, *a something caused to wander*, a mistake, from a root signifying to go astray).

Vers. 13, 14.—**Take also your brother,**

and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty—El Shaddai, the covenant God of Abraham (ch. xvii. 1), and of Jacob himself (ch. xxxv. 11)—**give you mercy** (literally, *bowels*, hence very tender affection, the inward parts being regarded as the seat of the emotions) **before the man, that he may send away**—literally, *and he shall send with you* (Kalisch), or for you (Keil)—**your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of** my children, **I am bereaved**—literally, *and I, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved*, an expression of the patriarch's acquiescence in the Divine will (cf. 2 Kings vii. 4; Esther iv. 16).

Ver. 15.—**And the men took that present** (which Jacob had specified), **and they took double money** (literally, *a doubling of the money*, i. e. the first money, and as much again for the new purchase; the phrase is different from that used in ver. 12, though the words are the same) **in their hand, and Benjamin** (*sc.* they took with them); **and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph** (*i. e.* in the corn-market).

Ver. 16.—**And when** (literally, *and*) **Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he** (literally, *and he*) **said to the ruler of his house**,—literally, *to him who was over his house*, i. e. the steward (cf. ch. xxiv. 2; xxxix. 4; xliv. 1) —**Bring** these **men home** (*i. e.* conduct these men to my house, which was probably at some distance), **and slay**,—literally, *slay a slaughter*. The assertion that the narrator is here guilty of an inaccuracy in representing Joseph as having animal food prepared for himself and his guests (Bohlen) is refuted by Herodotus (ii. 37, 40) and by Wilkinson ('Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. ch. vii. pp. 22, 23, ed. 1878), who says that "beef and goose constituted the principal part of the animal food throughout Egypt," and that according to the sculptures "a considerable quantity of meat was served up at those repasts to which strangers were invited." "Though there was scarcely an animal which was not held sacred in some province, there was, perhaps with the only exception of the cow, none which was not killed and eaten in other parts of the land" (Kalisch) —**and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon**—literally, *at the double lights* (צָהֳרָיִם), *i. e.* at mid-day, the time of greatest splendour.

Vers. 17, 18.—**And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house.** "A more natural picture of the conduct of men from the country, when taken into the house of a superior, cannot be drawn. When they are told to go inside they at once suspect that they are about to be punished or confined" (Roberts' 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 49). **And they said** (*sc.* to themselves), **Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us**,—literally, *that he may roll himself upon us* (cf. Job xxx. 14; Ps. xxii. 8; xxxvii. 5; Prov. xvi. 3). "To say a man rolls himself upon another is the Eastern way of saying he falls upon him" (Roberts' 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 49)—**and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.** The brethren of Joseph were clearly apprehensive of some serious stratagem to deprive them of liberty.

Vers. 19—22.—**And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house** (literally, *the man who was over Joseph's house*), **and they communed** (or spake) **with him at the door of the house** (*i. e.* before they entered), **and said, O sir**,—literally, *Pray, my lord; δεόμεθα κύριε* (LXX.)—**we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: and it came to pass, when we came to the inn**,—or halting-place (*vide* ch. xlii. 27)—**that we opened our sacks**,—this was not strictly accurate, as only one sack had been opened at the wayside khan, while the others were not examined till they had reached home; though, as an explanation of the difficulty, it has been suggested (*vide* Keil's 'Introduction,' vol. i. p. 109, note by Prof. Douglas) that all the sacks may have been, and probably were, opened at the inn, but that only one man found his money in his sack's mouth, as the next clause explains — **and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack**, —literally, *a man's money in the mouth of his sack*, i. e. one of them found his money there, while the others discovered their money, which was not "in the sack's mouth," but "in the sack" (ch. xlii. 35), only on emptying their sacks at home—**our money in full weight** (literally, *according to its weight*): **and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money** (*i. e.* the second silver of ver. 12) **have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.**

Ver. 23.—**And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God** (Elohim), **and the God of your father**,—an indication that Joseph's steward had been taught to fear and trust the God of the Hebrews (Wordsworth, Murphy)—**hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money** (literally, *your money came to me*). **And he brought Simeon out unto them.**

Ver. 24.—**And the man** (Joseph's steward) **brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave** them **water, and they washed their feet** (cf. ch. xviii. 4; xxiv. 32); **and he gave their asses provender.**

Ver. 25.—**And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread**

there. This must have been communicated to them after they had entered Joseph's palace, since they had obviously not learnt it upon the way thither (*vide supra*, ver. 18).

Ver. 26.—**And when Joseph came home** (after the despatch of public business), **they brought him the present which** was **in their hand** (*vide* ver. 11) **into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.** Thus they fulfilled the dream of the sheaves (ch. xxxvii. 7; cf. ch. xviii. 2; xix. 1).

Ver. 27.—**And he asked them of** their **welfare** (literally, *peace*), **and said, Is your father well** (literally, *Is there peace to your father?*), **the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?**

Ver. 28.—**And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.**

Ver. 29.—**And he** (*i. e.* Joseph) **lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said** (without waiting for an answer), **God be gracious unto thee, my son.** The tenderness of this language was much fitted to encourage the brethren.

Ver. 30.—**And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn** (literally, *were becoming warm*, from intensity of love) **upon his brother: and he sought** where **to weep**;—the second occasion on which Joseph is represented as overcome by the strength of his inward emotion, the first having been when his brethren were speaking about their cruelty towards himself (ch. xlii. 24)—**and he entered into** his **chamber, and wept there.**

Ver. 31.—**And he washed his face** (an indication of the violence of his weeping), **and went out** (from his chamber), **and refrained himself** (keeping his tears in check), **and said, Set on bread**—an expression used at the present day in Egypt for bringing dinner (Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. p. 41, ed. 1878).

Ver. 32.—**And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves.** "Joseph eats apart from his brethren, keeping strictly to the Egyptian mode; and the history does not omit to remark that in this point he adhered to the custom of the country" (Hävernick, § 21). **Because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews.** Herodotus (ii. 41) affirms that the Egyptians would neither use the knife, spit, or basin of a Grecian, nor taste the flesh of a clean cow if it happened to be cut with a Grecian knife. **For that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.** The reason for this separation from foreigners being that they dreaded being polluted by such as killed and ate cows, which animals were held in high veneration in Egypt.

Ver. 33.—**And they sat before him,**—that the Egyptians sat at meals is in exact accordance with the representations on the monuments, in which they are never exhibited as reposing on couches, but always as seated round a circular table resembling the *monopodium* of the Romans (*vide* Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. pp. 40, 41, with Dr. Birch's note; Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' ch. i. p. 38)—**the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another**—probably thinking that Joseph must have been supernaturally enlightened to discover so exactly the ages of strangers.

Ver. 34.—**And he took** and sent (literally, *and he sent*) **messes**—*maseoth*, from *nasa*, to take or lift up, *i. e.* things taken or lifted up, hence portions or gifts (2 Sam. xi. 8)—**unto them from before him** (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 23). The practice of thus honouring guests was also observed among other nations (*vide* 'Iliad,' vii. 321). **But Benjamin's mess** (or portion) **was five times so much as any of theirs**—literally, *exceeded the portions of all of them five hands*, i. e. five times. Herodotus (vi. 57) mentions that among the Spartans the king received a double portion. The unusually large portion assigned to Benjamin was designed as an expression of his strong fraternal affection, and perhaps also as a test of his brethren to ascertain if they were now free from that spirit of envy which had prompted their former cruelty to him. **And they drank, and were merry with him**—literally, *and drank largely with him*. Though the verb שָׁכַר sometimes signifies to drink to the full (Haggai i. 6; Cant. v. 1), and though intoxication was not unusual at Egyptian entertainments, there is no reason to suppose that either Joseph or his brethren were inebriated (Vulgate, Alford), or that more is meant than simply that their hearts became exhilarated "because their cares were dissipated by the kindness they were receiving, the presence of Simeon, and the attention paid to Benjamin" (Murphy).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—34.—*The second visit of Joseph's brethren to Egypt.* I. THE SCENE IN JACOB'S HOUSE AT HEBRON (vers. 1—15). 1. *The second journey proposed.* "Go again, buy us a little food." It was necessitated by the long continuance of the

famine, and the complete consumption of the corn they had brought from Egypt on the previous occasion. 2. *The second journey agreed on.* (1) The difficulty started. As explained by Judah, it was useless to go to Egypt unless accompanied by Benjamin, since the governor had solemnly protested and sworn that without him they should not only not obtain a grain of corn, but they should not even be admitted to his presence. But to speak of taking Benjamin to Egypt, as Jacob had already testified, and now again declared, was like driving a poniard into the old man's heart. As he thinks of it he can hardly forbear reproaching his stalwart sons for having heaped upon him one more unkindness in even mentioning the fact of Benjamin's existence. (2) The difficulty removed. Skilfully the eloquent Judah reasons with his aged sire, first pointing out that it was only in reply to the grand vizier's interrogations that they had referred to Benjamin at all, that, not suspecting any sinister motives on the part of their noble questioner, they had never dreamt of attempting concealment or evasion in their answers; urging the imperative necessity for Benjamin's going down with them if either they or their little ones were to be kept from starvation, solemnly engaging to be surety for the safe convoy of the beloved youth, and lastly delicately hinting that but for the delay occasioned by his (their father's) reluctance they might have been to Egypt and back since he first spoke of their going. 3. *The second journey prepared for* (vers. 11—13). Since it was inevitable that Benjamin must go, Jacob recommended them along with him to take (1) a present in their vessels for the great man whose favour they desired to secure; (2) second money, or money for the purchase of the grain they wished, to show that they came not as beggars, but as buyers; (3) the silver that had been returned in their sacks, to prove that they were honest, and regarded the matter simply as an oversight. It is well always to put the best construction on a dubious matter, and in particular to let not our good be evil spoken of. 4. *The second journey began* (vers. 14, 15). Listening to their father's prayer,—"God Almighty give you mercy before the man,"—witnessing their father's sorrowful resignation,—"If I be bereaved, I am bereaved,"—and observing faithfully their father's instructions, carrying a present of "the song of the land" and double money in their hands, the men rose up and went down to Egypt. 5. *The second journey completed* (ver. 15). In the providence of God they reached the land of Egypt and stood before Joseph. It is a special mercy to travellers when, escaping all the perils of the way, they arrive at their desired destinations in peace.

II. The scene in Joseph's house in Egypt (vers. 16—34). 1. *The reception of the brethren* (vers. 16, 17). Scarcely had the brethren arrived at the public mart than they were observed by Joseph. Directing his eyes eagerly in search of Benjamin, he is gratified by noticing that he has not been left behind. Preserving as before his incognito, he gives instructions to his steward to convey them to his palace, and prepare a dinner for him and them at the hour of noon. 2. *The apprehensions of the brethren* (vers. 18—24). (1) The nature of them. They feared lest Joseph was only seeking occasion to fall upon them and take them for bondmen. (2) The ground of them. This was the money which had been discovered in their sacks, and for which as they imagined they were now being arrested. (3) The expression of them. Without directly saying what they dreaded, they begin to deprecate the wrath of the steward, and to offer explanations concerning the money (vers. 20—22). (4) The removal of them. Although the steward was not yet aware that the strangers were his master's brethren, he was perfectly cognisant of their innocence in the matter of the money, and of his master's desire to show them kindness. Accordingly he seeks to reassure them by encouraging them to dismiss their apprehensions—"Peace be to you, fear not;" by telling them to regard the treasure in their sacks as a Divine gift, since it was indubitable that he had received their money—"Your God hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money;" by producing Simeon before them, no doubt in the enjoyment of perfect health and happiness—"and he brought Simeon out unto them;" by exercising towards them the rights of hospitality—"the man gave them water, and they washed their feet;" and by providing for the wants of their beasts—"and he gave their asses provender." 3. *The homage of the brethren* (vers. 25—31). (1) Its presentation: with precious gifts—the delicacies of the land of Canaan; with dutiful obeisance

—"they bowed themselves to him to the earth." (2) Its acceptance; which was indicated by the friendly inquiries of the governor—"Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?" by the warm benediction he pronounced on Benjamin—"God be gracious unto thee, my son;" by the rising emotion which he could with difficulty repress—"his bowels did yearn upon his brother, and he sought where to weep;" and by the order which he issued to his servants—"Set on bread." 4. *The entertainment of the brethren.* (1) The separation of the guests, first from the host, and then from one another, the Egyptians from the Canaanites, and both from Joseph, the reason being that the Egyptians might not eat with foreigners in case of contracting pollution. (2) The order of the brethren, each being arranged before the governor in accordance with their ages, a circumstance which appears to have simultaneously evoked their wonder—"and the men marvelled one at another." (3) The portions from the host, one to each of the nine oldest, and five to the youngest, which were designed as marks of special favour. (4) The hilarity of the company. The fears of the brethren disappearing, and their enjoyment rising, as they talked and drank with the gracious governor who had brought them to his palace.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xliii.—*Lessons of life.* I. The chief lesson of this chapter is the MINGLING TOGETHER OF THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD WITH HIS PURPOSE OF GRACE. It was part of the Divine plan that Jacob and his family should be settled for a long period in Egypt. It could only be brought about by the transference in some way of the point of attraction to Jacob's heart from Canaan to the strange land. Hence "Jacob" is now "Israel," reminding us how the future is involved in all the events of this time. "Judah" is the chief agent in this matter. The very names are significant of Divine promises—"Judah," "Israel," "Joseph," "Benjamin." The conduct of Joseph cannot be explained except on the ground of his inspiration. He is not acting. He is not trifling with human feelings. He is not merely following the dictate of his own personal affections. He is, under Divine direction, planning for the removal of his father's house to Egypt that the people of God may pass through their season of trial in the house of bondage. Another point—

II. God's blessing on a TRUE HUMANITY. THE THOROUGHLY HUMAN CHARACTER OF THE NARRATIVE. The *tenderness*, the *pathos*, the *simplicity*, the *truthfulness*, especially in the case of Joseph himself. How little he had been spoiled by prosperity! That is the *criterion of real greatness.* The Bible histories help us to keep in mind that real religion does not suppress the human, but preserves and develops all that is best and noblest in the man.

III. THE GRACIOUS WISDOM OF THE GOOD MAN IN HIS CONDUCT TOWARDS OTHERS. Joseph's dealing with his brethren gradually preparing their minds for the great announcement which was soon to be made. Both his kindness to them and his particular inquiries after Jacob, and affectionate salute of Benjamin, must have *roused their curiosity* and *disarmed their terrors.* As they "drank and were merry" with the great Egyptian ruler, and their youngest brother rejoiced in the special mark of favour, which was favour to all, they must have felt the bondage of their previous apprehensions slipping away from them, and have anticipated some good thing in preparation for them. Moreover, there may have been the intention working in Joseph's mind of accustoming the Egyptians to the sight of those Hebrew people, and so opening the way to their subsequent elevation when as his brethren he should settle them in Goshen. There was great wisdom in all this lingering in divulging the great secret.

IV. THE MARK OF FAITH IS A SINGLE EYE TO GOD'S GLORY. We should endeavour to blend the *personal* with the *larger interests* of God's kingdom. *Family life* should be based upon *religious foundations.*—R.

Ver. 18.—*Distrust the fruit of sin.* Why should they be afraid? The invitation was an honour not unusual. Abraham was received at Pharaoh's court (Gen. xii. 15). And the brethren were evidently people of large possessions with a considerable

retinue, as they were to carry food for so many; and they had brought the proof required that they were true men. Had Joseph intended to do them harm he might have done it before. It was conscious guilt that made them fear. What they had done to their brother suggested similar treatment being meted to them. Perhaps they had almost forgotten it. But God left not himself without witness to bring their sin to remembrance. The stain of sin on the conscience is indelible. Time cannot remove it. Occupation may turn the thoughts from it, but it returns again and again. The act of wrong may be little thought of at the time. Only afterwards is it felt that it cannot be undone (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 9). This explains the attitude of so many toward God. Why is there such slowness to receive the gospel just as it is offered? When men are bidden to their brother's table; when his will is declared they shall sup with me (cf. Rev. iii. 20), why is there such shrinking as if they were being led into danger; as if God were laying some obligation on them which they cannot fulfil, to bring them into bondage for ever? It is because of sin in the heart; perhaps unfelt, unthought of; but it is there, the fact of a self-chosen life. And if these are invited to closer communion with God, straightway they are afraid; suspicious of God. And hence, when the gospel invitation is pressed, and the Lamb of God held up, and the power of the blood of Christ and the welcome for all proclaimed, and they are bidden to trust, to accept salvation, men try to fortify their position: "O sir, we have done this or that" (cf. Matt. xviii. 26), clinging to distrust instead of striving against it.

I. This distrust and suspicion of God arises from the presence of sin not fully recognised as sin; while the man is still trying to set good deeds against bad ones, or to find excuses for faults. It is the effect of sin before conviction by the Holy Spirit. Real conviction brings to God (Ps. li. 4; Luke xviii. 13). It is unacknowledged sin that separates.

II. Distrust is removed by a real belief in the atonement (Heb. ix. 25), God's plan for reconciling the sinful to himself (Rom. iii. 26). Hence this is the turning point of the spiritual life (John iii. 18); the great work (John vi. 29) out of which, as from a germ, the whole Christian life must grow.—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Vers. 1, 2.—**And he** (*i. e.* Joseph) **commanded the steward of his house,**—literally, *him that was over his house* (ch. xliii. 15)—**saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth** (as before, but not this time as a test). **And put my cup,**—גָּבִיעַ, from an unused root, גָּבַע, conveying the sense of elevation or roundness; hence a goblet or bowl, commonly of a large size (Jer. xxxv. 5), as distinguished from the כּוֹס, or smaller cup, into which, from the *gâbia*, wine or other liquid was poured (cf. ch. xl. 11)—**the silver cup,**—τὸ κόνδυ τὸ ἀργυροῦν (LXX.). Bohlen mentions that the religious drinking utensil of the Indian priests is called *kundi*—**in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money**—literally, *the silver of his grain,* or of his purchase. **And he** (*i. e.* the steward) **did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.**

Vers. 3—5.—**As soon as the morning was light** (literally, *the morning became bright*), **the men** (literally, *and the men*) **were sent away, they and their asses.** That Joseph did not make himself known to his brothers at the repast was not due to unnatural callousness which caused his heart to remain cold and steeled (Kalisch), or to a fear lest he should thereby destroy the character of his mission which made him the medium of retribution for his brothers (Kalisch), but to the fact that in his judgment either his brothers had not been sufficiently tested, or the time did not appear convenient for the disclosure of his secret. **And when they were gone out of the city** (literally, *they went forth out of the city*), **and not yet far off** (literally, *they had not gone far*), **Joseph** (literally, *and Joseph*) **said unto his steward** (or man over his house), **Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them** (literally, *and overtake them, and say to them*), **Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?** The interpolation at this point of the words, "Why did you steal my silver goblet?" (LXX., Vulgate, Syriac) is superfluous. **Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?**—literally, *and divining he divineth,* or maketh trial, *in it,* the verb נָחַשׁ (from which is derived *nachash,* a serpent: *vide*

ch. iii. 1) originally signifying to hiss or whisper, and hence to mutter incantations, to practise ophiomancy, and generally to divine. The special form of divination here referred to (κυλικομαντεία, or divining out of cups) was practised by the ancient Egyptians (Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 39). "Small pieces of gold or silver, together with precious stones, marked with strange figures and signs, were thrown into the vessel; after which certain incantations were pronounced, and the evil demon was invoked; the latter was then supposed to give the answer either by intelligible words, or by pointing to some of the characters on the precious stones, or in some other more mysterious manner. Sometimes the goblet was filled with pure water, upon which the sun was allowed to play; and the figures which were thus formed, or which a lively imagination fancied it saw, were interpreted as the desired omen" (Kalisch). Traces of this ancient practice of soothsaying have been detected by some writers in the magnificent vase of turquoise belonging to Jamsheed, the Solomon of Persia. Like Merlin's cup, described by Spenser ('Faery Queene,' iii. 2, 19)—

"It vertue had to show in perfect sight
Whatever thing was in the world contained
Betwixt the lowest earth and heven's hight,
So that it to the looker appertaynd."

A similar account is given by Homer of the cup of Nestor; and Alexander the Great is reported to have possessed a mystic goblet of a like kind. It is said that in the storming of Seringapatam the unfortunate Tippoo Saib retired to gaze on his divining cup, and that after standing awhile absorbed in it he returned to the fight and fell (*vide* Kitto's 'Cyclopedia,' art. Divination). **Ye have done evil in so doing.**

Ver. 6.—**And he** (*i. e.* the steward) **overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.**

Vers. 7—10.—**And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do** (literally, *far be thy servants from doing*) **according to this thing: behold, the money** (literally, *the silver*), **which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan** (this was an irrefragable proof of their honesty): **how then should we steal out of my lord's house silver or gold?** They were even so confident of their innocence that they ventured on a rash proposition. **With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen**—literally, *for servants to my lord*. **And he** (the steward) **said, Now also let it be according to your words.** So LXX., Vulgate, and commentators generally; but Kalisch reads it as an interrogation, "Is it right according to your words?" meaning that strict justice demanded only the punishment of the thief, as he explained. **He with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye** (*i. e.* the others of you) **shall be blameless.**

Vers. 11—13.—**Then they speedily took down** (literally, *and they hasted and took down*) **every man his sack** (from off his ass) **to the ground, and opened every man his sack.** Thus as it were delivering them up for examination. **And he** (the steward) **searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest** (in order thereby to mask the deception): **and the cup was found** (where the steward himself had put it) **in Benjamin's sack. Then** (literally, *and*) **they rent their clothes** (on the *simlah* vide ch. ix. 23), **and laded every man his ass** (by putting on the sack which had been taken down), **and returned to the city.**

Vers. 14—17.—**And Judah**—who is recognised as the leader in this second embassy to Egypt (ch. xliii. 8)—**and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there**:—"awaiting, no doubt, the result which he anticipated" (Murphy)—**and they fell before him on the ground.** The expression indicates a complete prostration of the body. It was a token of their penitence, and a sign that they craved his forgiveness. **And Joseph said unto them,**—in a speech not of "cruel and haughty irony" (Kalisch), but simply of assumed resentment—**What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not** (or, did you not know?) **that such a man as I can certainly divine?**—literally, *divining can divine* (vide on ver. 5). Though Joseph uses this language, and is represented by his steward as possessing a divining cup, there is no reason to suppose that he was in the habit of practising this heathen superstition. **And Judah said** (acting throughout this scene as the spokesman of his brethren), **What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?** (*i. e.* justify ourselves, or purge ourselves from suspicion). **God** (literally, *the Elohim*) **hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants** (literally, *servants to my lord*), **both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he** (*i. e.* Joseph) **said, God forbid that I should do so** (*vide* ver. 9): **but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.** Thus they were once more tested as to whether they could, as before, callously deliver up their father's favourite, and so bring down the grey hairs of their father to the grave, or would heroically and self-sacrificingly offer their own lives and liberties for

his protection (Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Murphy, and others). How nobly they stood the test Judah's pathetic supplication reveals.

Vers. 18—34.—**Then Judah came near to him, and said,**—the speech of Judah in behalf of his young brother Benjamin has been fittingly characterised as "one of the masterpieces of Hebrew composition" (Kalisch), "one of the grandest and fairest to be found in the Old Testament" (Lange), "a more moving oration than ever orator pronounced" (Lawson), "one of the finest specimens of natural eloquence in the world" (Inglis). Without being distinguished by either brilliant imagination or highly poetic diction, "its inimitable charm and excellence consist in the power of psychological truth, easy simplicity, and affecting pathos" (Kalisch)—**Oh my lord** (the interjection *Oh!* is the same as that used by Judah in ch. xliii. 20; *q. v.*), **let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears** (probably pressing towards him in his eagerness), **and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou** art **even as Pharaoh** (*i. e.* one invested with the authority of Pharaoh, and therefore able, like Pharaoh, either to pardon or condemn). **My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age** (*vide* ch. xxxvii. 3), **a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.** Substantially this is the account which the brethren gave of themselves from the first (ch. xlii. 13); only Judah now with exquisite tact as well as resistless pathos dwells on the threefold circumstance that the little one whose life was at stake was inexpressibly dear to his father for his dead brother's sake as well as for his departed mother's and his own. **And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.** This last clause is also a rhetorical enlargement of Joseph's words, ἐπιμελοῦμαι αὐτοῦ (LXX.); the phrase, to set one's eyes on any one, being commonly used in a good sense, signifying to regard any one with kindness, to look to his good (cf. Ezra v. 5; Job xxiv. 23; Jer. xxxix. 12; xl. 4). **And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father,** his father **would die.** Judah in this no doubt correctly reports the original conversation, although the remark is not recorded in the first account. **And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more** (cf. ch. xliii. 3—5). **And it came to pass** (literally, *it was*) **when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.** The effect upon Jacob of their sad communication Judah does not recite (ch. xlii. 36), but passes on to the period of the commencement of the second journey. **And our father said** (*i. e.* after the consumption of the corn supply), **Go again,** and **buy us a little food** (*vide* ch. xliii. 2). **And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother** be **with us. And thy servant my father said unto us** (at this point Judah with increased tenderness alludes to the touching lamentation of the stricken patriarch as he first listens to the unwelcome proposition to take Benjamin from his side), **Ye know that my wife**—Rachel was all through her life the wife of his affections (cf. ch. xlvi. 19)—**bare me two sons:**—Joseph and Benjamin (ch. xxx. 22, 24; xxxv. 18)—**and the one** (Joseph) **went out from me** (and returned not, thus indirectly alluding to his death), **and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since.** Jacob means that had Joseph been alive, he would certainly have returned; but that as since that fatal day of his departure from Hebron he had never beheld him, he could only conclude that his inference was correct, and that Joseph was devoured by some beast of prey. **And if ye take this also from me** (in the sense which the next clause explains), **and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave**—*Sheol* (vide ch. xxxvii. 35). **Now therefore** (literally, *and now*) **when I come** (or go) **to thy servant my father, and the lad** be **not with us; seeing that his life** (or soul) **is bound up in the lad's life** (or soul); **it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not** with us, **that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever** (*vide* ch. xliii. 9). **Now therefore** (literally, *and now*), **I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman** (or servant) **to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.** "There was no duty that imperiously prohibited Judah from taking the place of his unfortunate brother. His children, and even his wife, if he had been in the married state, might have been sent to Egypt. He was so far master of his own liberty that he could warrantably put himself in Benjamin's room, if the governor gave his consent" (Lawson). **For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad** be **not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on** (literally, *shall find*) **my father.** The sublime heroism of this noble act of self-sacrifice on the part of Judah it is impossible to

over-estimate. In behalf of one whom he knew was preferred to a higher place in his father's affection than himself, he was willing to renounce his liberty rather than see his aged parent die of a broken heart. The self-forgetful magnanimity of such an action has never been eclipsed, and seldom rivalled. After words so exquisitely beautiful and profoundly pathetic it was impossible for Joseph to doubt that a complete change had passed upon his brethren, and in particular upon Judah, since the day when he had eloquently urged, and they had wickedly consented, to sell their brother Joseph into Egypt. Everything was now ready for the denouement in this domestic drama. The story of Joseph's discovery of himself to his astonished brethren is related in the ensuing chapter.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—34.—*Joseph's artifice to detain Benjamin, or the story of the silver goblet.* I. JOSEPH'S STRATAGEM (vers. 1—13). 1. *The formation of the plot* (vers. 1—5). (1) The singular nature of the plot. This was, after filling the men's sacks with corn, and putting each man's money in his sack's mouth as before, that the steward should secretly deposit in the amtachath of Benjamin the silver goblet from which Joseph was accustomed to fill his wine-cup when he drank. (2) The immediate object of the plot. It was designed that the company should be pursued under suspicion of theft, and that, on examination made, Benjamin should be arrested as a criminal. (3) The ultimate purpose of the plot. Not simply to detain Benjamin, whom Joseph longed to have beside him, but chiefly to try the others as to whether they could witness unmoved Benjamin's consignment to exile and probable imprisonment, as formerly with callous hearts they had beheld his (Joseph's) sale and departure as a bondman into Egypt. 2. *The execution of the plot* (vers. 6—12). (1) The cup was put into the sack of Benjamin, as arranged, and the men allowed to depart with the first streak of dawn in happy unconsciousness of what had been devised against them. (2) Overtaken by the steward, and abruptly charged with having stolen his master's divining cup, they indignantly repel the charge, and somewhat rashly suggest that their sacks should be searched on the spot, at the same time offering, so conscious were they of innocence, to deliver up the culprit to death, and themselves to a voluntary captivity. (3) Taking them at their word, and modifying their proposal to the extent that he would take the guilty one only as a servant, the sacks were opened out, and, as the steward of course expected, the missing vase was found where he himself had placed it, in the amtachath of Benjamin. 3. *The result of the plot* (vers. 13—16). (1) Utter consternation of mind: "they rent their clothes" to give expression to the anguish of their souls. (2) Instantaneous retracing of their steps: "they laded every man his ass, and returned to the city." (3) Abject acknowledgment of their offence: "What shall we say unto my lord? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." (4) Faithful fulfilment of their contract: "Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

II. BENJAMIN'S SENTENCE (ver. 17). 1. *Exceedingly severe.* He became a bondman. Remark upon the sadness of slavery, even when most mitigated. 2. *Circumstantially justified.* Appearances were against him. But the evidence of circumstances is sometimes fallacious. 3. *Absolutely undeserved.* In every sense of the expression Benjamin was blameless. 4. *Wisely designed.* It was meant to assay the characters of both Benjamin and his brethren.

III. JUDAH'S SUPPLICATION (vers. 18—34). 1. *Deferential humility* (ver. 18). It is difficult to imagine language more respectful and deferential than that of Judah. Almost every word is so framed as to convey a sense of Joseph's lofty station, superior dignity, and just cause of indignation against the speaker. 2. *Artless simplicity* (vers. 19—26). Infinitely more powerful than either voluble rhetoric or closely-compacted argument is the plain and unsophisticated logic of truth. Without the most distant approach to sophistry, or even an attempt at persuasion, Judah confines himself to a bare recital of the facts of the case which were already well known to Joseph. 3. *Inimitable pathos* (vers. 28—32). Depicting his father's love for Benjamin for his dead mother's and his lost brother's sakes, he tells how he himself had become surety for the lad to his aged parent, and that if he should fail to take him back again in safety he would bring down his father's grey hairs with sorrow to

the grave. 4. *Heroic self-sacrifice* (vers. 33, 34). Rather than that Benjamin should not go home again to Hebron, he would himself remain a bondman to my lord the governor for ever. Nay, he explicitly makes offer that he should take the young man's place, as he would rather die than see the sorrow which his absence would bring down upon his venerable sire. Noble Judah! thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xliv.—*Character built on faith.* This chapter continues the same thread of Joseph's policy, and the same lessons are in it.

I. Practical wisdom the fruit of piety. The true man is the strong man. With a deep knowledge of the human heart, Joseph felt quite sure that the only way to move Jacob from Canaan was to detain Benjamin.

II. The sanctity of the affections. Real religion their only safeguard in the world's hardening and perverting influences. Joseph did *apparent* violence to his brethren's and his father's feelings that he might afterwards fill them with joy. There was a great deal of genuine family affection at the bottom of the scheme. He could not bear to part with Benjamin. He at first meant to maintain the dissembling till the old man was brought, but nature burst through the restraint. The whole a testimony to the real *purity* and *simplicity* of Joseph's heart, and therefore, in such circumstances of temptation as his, to his real religion.

III. Contrast between God's ideal of greatness and the world's. Great rulers and statesmen are not wont thus to cultivate the emotions. The tendency of high position is to harden the heart, and to change nature into policy, and the real into the artificial. Yet such instances as Joseph show the possibility of uniting the two spheres—the secular and the spiritual, and being great in both.—R.

Ver. 5.—*Probation.* Divination by cups was practised by the ancient Egyptians. But no reason to suppose that Joseph actually used this art. It would have been inconsistent with his habitual faithfulness to God, and with the ascription to him alone of the power to reveal secrets (ch. xl. 7—xli. 16). He was now acting a part. He spoke in the character of an Egyptian ruler, to whom the nation ascribed supernatural wisdom. We need not now inquire how far he was right in this. But his object was to try his brethren, whether, and how much, they loved their father and their young brother. He contrived that Benjamin should appear to have incurred the penalty of servitude. What would the rest do? Would they, as they had done to him, leave their brother in slavery? Would they go home and deceive their father by a false story of his death? Could they bear to renew his grief? Had they learned that God marked their actions, and ordained the things that happened to them? The cup hidden in Benjamin's sack was indeed that whereby he was divining their secret thoughts. They stood the test. They acknowledged God's hand, and refused to purchase their own safety at the price of their brother's freedom (contrast ch. xxxvii. 26, 27, with ch. xliv. 30, 34). Forthwith the clouds passed away. In him whom they feared they found a brother.

I. God by his providence tries the spirit that is in us. The events of our lives are ordered so as to bring this about (Deut. viii. 2). They are to us as Joseph's cup. Daily work, family life, professional duties, the common intercourse of society, raise questions which are answered according as God or self rules the heart and guides the actions. Hence no part of our life is unimportant in a spiritual point of view. Things, in themselves of small account, test the character and motives of the life, as floating straws show the current; and this all the more because their spiritual bearing is not apparent. Kindness, truth, unselfishness, in little matters, reveal the man more truly than on greater and more conspicuous occasions (cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 3).

II. Trials are sent in love as instruments of blessing (James i. 12). Through their operation the Christian life is matured (Rom. v. 3—5). Every grace must be exercised in order to grow, and trial is the opportunity of exercise. Without trial there could be no real victory over evil, no real submission of the will to God. We pray to be kept from temptation. To run into it is to court a fall. But where

God sends trial grace is provided (1 Cor. x. 13), answering every need; help for the falling or fallen as well as strength for the steadfast.

III. HOW TO STAND IN THE DAY OF TRIAL. In each of the messages to the Churches (Rev. ii., iii.) trial is implied—now of persecution, now of false doctrine, now of indolent spiritual ease. And the blessing is "to him that overcometh." How? "By the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. xii. 11), *i. e.* by faith in it. Not merely belief in the doctrine, but realising what the work of Christ has won for us, and the love of the Father from which it proceeds, and the claim which the mercies of God make upon us (Rom. xii. 1). The first step is receiving with an undoubting spirit the love of God; not letting in unbelief in the garb of humility. The next is keeping that truth present in the mind in the midst of daily work, that the love of Christ may constrain the direction of our life.—M.

Vers. 14—34.—*The conversion of Judah.* I. THE EVIDENCE OF IT. 1. The unexpected confession of guilt which he makes. "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." 2. The sensitive appreciation of the terrible blow which Benjamin's loss would be to Jacob. "When he seeth the lad is not with us he will die." 3. The noble sacrifice he proposes to make for Benjamin. "Let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord."

II. THE CAUSE OF IT. 1. The memory of his old sin, which appears to have haunted his conscience. 2. The arrestment of Divine Providence, which in his Egyptian experience he suffered. 3. The inward operation of God's grace upon his heart.

Learn—1. That no living sinner is beyond the reach of conversion. 2. That for the most part the work of conversion is gradually consummated; and—3. That when once it is completed it appears in a change of character and life.—W.

Ver. 32.—*A surety.* "For thy servant became surety for the lad unto his father." The brethren of Joseph had been surprised on their second visit to Egypt at the cordiality of their reception. They started homewards with well-laden sacks and trembling gladness. They had not gone far when they were overtaken, their sacks searched, and the cup found. With depressed spirits and dreary forebodings they were brought back to the city, and into the presence of Joseph. Joseph had several motives in his strange treatment of his brethren. He may have desired in some way to punish them for their sin against himself by letting them taste some of the bitterness he had experienced when, ruthlessly torn from his home, he was sent a shrinking slave into a distant land. Human nature was strong in Joseph as in others. His brethren had to learn the nature of their own sin by suffering. They have also to learn that their lives were forfeited by sin to justice. He wished also to bring them to a state of humility, so that they should afterwards behave rightly to each other. He may have had doubts as to the safety of his own brother Benjamin with them. He tests thus their interest in their half-brother, for they could have left with some sort of excuse Benjamin as a slave in Egypt. He tests also their regard for their father, and finds out also how they would look upon himself when he should reveal himself to them. Judah is the spokesman for the rest in the painful circumstances in which they are all placed. Joseph proposes to keep only Benjamin as a slave, but Judah draws near, and with deepest humility and heartfelt earnestness pleads with Joseph. Consider—

I. JUDAH'S PLEADING. 1. Judah pleads as surety for Benjamin, and as a brother. We find that it is Judah and not Reuben who pleads now for the life of a brother. Age has mellowed the fierce Judah. We cannot always tell from what a man is in his early years what he will be later on. (1) Judah admits the wrong, attempts no excuse or extenuation. All evidence was against Benjamin. Judah and the rest cannot tell what to think of the act. He admitted it. We must admit our sin. (2) Confessed that it was right that Benjamin and they should suffer. Some blame others for their circumstances and sins. To all appearance here Benjamin was alone to blame. (3) He throws himself on the righteousness and compassion of Joseph. This is all we can do before God. He pleads the pain which it will cause to his father. His appeal is most pathetic. Read it, and the fount of tears must be touched. In all the volumes of fiction ever written there is nothing to surpass the tenderness and

pathos of this pleading of Judah. 2. We learn from this position and pleading of Judah as to how we should approach God. We have sinned and can only throw ourselves on his mercy. We see also how Christ pleads for us. His pleading is real and earnest. He prayed on earth for his disciples. The present is a dispensation of mediation. Hence Christ still pleads as our surety in heaven.

II. JUDAH'S OFFER. He is ready to be bound for Benjamin. It is one thing to talk, another to act. He had promised his father to bring Benjamin again (ch. xliii. 9), and he wishes to keep his word. He became surety, a guarantee, as one who is bound by signing a paper. He was answerable to his father. He is ready to give his service for Benjamin, his life for his brother. His faithfulness was thus proved. Christ is our surety. He makes himself one with us (Heb. ii. 11). He sprang from Judah (Heb. vii. 14). He became one with us in nature and in temptation, and was accepted as our substitute, was bound, abused, and crucified. He bore the curse for us (Gal. iii. 13). He sacrificed himself for us. Christ died for us who were below him. We may see in the success of Judah's pleading an indication of the success of Jesus' work. Joseph needed no entreaty to be merciful to Benjamin. He was nearer of kin to Benjamin than Judah was. So God is *our Father*. Joseph only wished to see the brethren in a fit state to be forgiven. They were entirely forgiven (vers. 5—15). He forgave freely, and wished them to forgive themselves. He knew very well that if they began to blame themselves too much, or to upbraid each other, they would never be happy. Forgiveness should produce peace. 1. Let us see ourselves in those suppliant brothers of Joseph. 2. Let us see in Judah how Christ pleads for us, and with what power. Certainly he excelled in his appeal, in wisdom, boldness, eloquence, tenderness, and self-sacrifice. How much more should we not praise Jesus for his power, his life, his love, sufferings, death, and present intercession. 3. Let us then trust him. What would have been thought of the others if they should have said to Judah, "You are not equal to being surety for him," or "You are not of sufficient standing, not above us, so as to speak in the name of the rest"? And is not Christ equal to the work of securing our salvation? If he can do it, shall we attempt to mar by our meddling? Full atonement is made, as well as powerful intercession offered. What we have to do is to trust Christ's work. Let us give up hope of preparing ourselves. He is not like some who are sureties, and are unwilling to pay. He *has* paid. The law and justice have nothing to demand. Should either present a claim, point to the cross, for that answers all demands. Oh the mystery of redeeming love! Oh the simplicity and yet the depth of meaning contained in that work of Christ! It is a stumbling-block to the high-minded, but a salvation to the humble.—H.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLV.

Vers. 1, 2.—**Then** (literally, *and*) **Joseph could not refrain himself** (*i. e.* keep himself from giving way to the impulses of love) **before all them that stood by him** (*i. e.* the Egyptian officials of his household); **and he cried** (or made proclamation, issued an instruction), **Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.** It was true delicacy on the part of Joseph which prompted the discovery of himself to his brethren in private; not simply because he did not wish to pain his brethren by a public reference to their past wickedness, *ne facinus illud detestabile multis testibus innotescat* (Calvin), but because the unrestrained outburst of emotion *erga fratres et parentem non posset ferre alienorum præsentiam et aspectum* (Luther). **And he wept aloud** (literally, *and he gave forth*, or uttered, *his voice in weeping*): **and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.** The meaning is that the Egyptian officials of Joseph's house, who were standing outside, heard, and reported it to the house of Pharaoh (Keil, Murphy). It is not necessary to suppose that Joseph's residence was so close to the palace that his voice was heard by the inmates (Lange).

Ver. 3.—**And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph.** The effect of this announcement can be better imagined than described. Hitherto he had been known to his brethren as Zaphnath-paaneah. Now the voice and the appearance of their long-lost brother would rush upon their minds at the first sound of the familiar name, and fill them with apprehension. Probably Joseph's

discernment of this in their countenances was the reason why he asked so abruptly after Jacob. **Doth my father yet live?** It is not now "the old man of whom ye spake" (ch. xliii. 27) for whom Joseph inquires, but his own beloved and revered parent—"my father." "Before it was a question of courtesy, but now of love" (Alford). **And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled** (or cast into a trepidation, hence terrified) **at his presence**—literally, *before his face*. Not only did his present greatness overawe them, but the recollection of their former crimes against him filled them with alarm.

Vers. 4—13.—**And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you.** It is probable they had instinctively shrunk from his presence on learning the astounding fact that he was Joseph, but felt reassured by the kindly tone of Joseph's words. **And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.** It was impossible to evade allusion to their early wickedness, and this Joseph does in a spirit not of angry upbraiding, but of elevated piety and tender charity. **Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves** (literally, *let it not burn in your eyes*, as in ch. xxxi. 35), **that ye sold me hither** (their self-recriminations and heart upbraidings for their former wickedness Joseph in all probability saw depicted in their faces): **for God** (Elohim) **did send me before you to preserve life** (literally, *for the preservation of life*). **For these two years hath the famine been in the land** (literally, *in the midst of the land*): **and yet** there are **five years, in the which** there shall **neither** be **earing nor harvest**—literally, *neither ploughing nor reaping*, the term ploughing, or earing, *charish* (cf. ἄροσις, *aratio*, Anglo-Saxon, *erian*), being derived from a root signifying to cut. **And God** (Elohim, the use of which here and in ver. 5 instead of Jehovah is sufficiently explained by remembering that Joseph simply desires to point out the overruling providence of God in his early transportation to Egypt) **sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth** (literally, *to keep for you a remnant on the earth*, i. e. to preserve the family from extinction through the famine), **and to save your lives by a great deliverance**—literally, *to preserve life to you to a great deliverance*, i. e. by a providential rescue (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), which is better than to a great nation or posterity, פְּלֵיטָה being understood, as in 2 Sam. xv. 14; 2 Kings xix. 30, 31, to mean a remnant escaped from slaughter (Bohlen), an interpretation which Rosenmüller thinks admissible, but Kalisch disputes. **So now** (literally, *and now*) it was **not you that sent me hither, but God**—literally, *for the Elohim* (sent me). Joseph's brethren sent him to be a slave; God sent him to be a saviour (Hughes). **And he hath made me a father to Pharaoh,**—*i. e.* a wise and confidential friend and counsellor (Keil, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary;' cf. 1 Macc. xi. 32). Murphy explains the term as signifying "a second author of life," with obvious reference to the interpretation of his dreams and the measures adopted to provide against the famine—**and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt** (*vide* ch. xli. 40, 41). **Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God** (Elohim) **hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen.** Goshen, Γεσὲμ 'Αραβίας (LXX.), was a region on the east of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, extending as far as the wilderness of Arabia, a land of pastures (ch. xlvi. 34), exceedingly fertile (ch. xlvii. 6), styled also the land of Rameses (ch. xlvii. 11), and including the cities Pithon and Rameses (Exod. i. 11), and probably also *On*, or Heliopolis (Josephus, 'Ant.,' ii. 7, 6; Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 42; Gesenius, 'Lexicon,' p. 183). **And thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee** (the verb is the Pilpel of כּוּל, to hold up, hence to sustain); **for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty**—literally, *be robbed*, from יָרַשׁ, to take possession (Keil), or fall into slavery, *i. e.* through poverty (Knobel, Lange). **And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of** (literally, *ye shall relate to my father*) **all my glory** (cf. ch. xxxi. 1) **in Egypt, and of all** (literally, *all*) **that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.** Calvin thinks that Joseph would not have made such liberal promises to his brethren without having previously obtained Pharaoh's consent, *nisi regis permissu;* but this does not appear from the narrative.

Vers. 14, 15.—**And he** (*i. e.* Joseph) **fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.** "Benjamin is the central point whence leads out the way to reconciliation" (Lange). "Here brotherly affection is drawn out by affection, tear answering tear" (Hughes; cf. ch. xxxiii. 4). **Moreover he kissed all his brethren,**—"the seal of recognition, of reconciliation, and of salutation" (Lange)—**and wept upon them.** It has been thought that

Benjamin stood when Joseph embraced him, and that the two wept upon each other's neck, but that the brethren bowed themselves at Joseph's feet, causing the expression to be, "and he wept upon them" (Lange). And after that his brethren talked with him—feeling themselves reassured by such demonstrations of affection.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—15.—*Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren.* I. The announcement. "I am Joseph, whom ye sold into Egypt." 1. *How it was made.* (1) *In privacy.* "There stood no man with Joseph, while he made himself known to his brethren." This was natural. The emotions of the moment were too strong and deep to be shared in or even witnessed by strangers. But it was also merciful. Joseph knew that he could not divulge his secret without a reference to the past, and he would not expose his brothers' guilt and shame in the presence of unsympathising lookers-on. (2) *With tears.* "Joseph could not refrain himself" even "before all them that stood before him," and scarcely had they withdrawn than "he wept aloud." From the first Joseph had a herculean task to perform in keeping his emotion within bounds. This was partly the explanation of the rough treatment he gave his brethren. Had he yielded to the tender feelings which the sight of Reuben and Judah and the others kindled in his breast, he would at once have been discovered. Yet it was all that he could do to avoid detection. Once and again he had to retire from their presence to relieve his bursting heart by "weeping" (cf. ch. xlii. 24; xliii. 30). But this time the rising flood of emotion was too strong to be repressed even long enough to admit of his escape. The pathetic eloquence of Judah, the earnest, tearful pleading combined with the sublime and affecting heroism of the man who offered himself to be a bondman for ever, that his young brother might escape and that his father's heart might not be broken, was too much for the Egyptian viceroy, and he sobbed aloud. (3) *With forgiveness.* Few things are more touching in this wholly melting story than the considerate tenderness of Joseph in sparing his brethren's feelings, and the exquisite delicacy with which he leads them to understand that he cherishes against them not the least resentment. Scarcely has he made the startling disclosure that he was Joseph, than, as if to prevent them from thinking of their sin, he hurries on to ask about their father. Then, as he sees them shrinking in alarm from his presence, expecting doubtless that the hour of recompense for Dothan had arrived, he kindly asks them not to stand aloof from him, but to come near. Again, as he understands the impossibility of their ever shutting their eyes to their deplorable wickedness, he tries to lead them rather to contemplate the wonderful way in which the hand of God had overruled his captivity for the salvation of their entire household. "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Beautiful sophistry of love! I do not know that Joseph's brethren would believe it; but it is obvious that in the enthusiasm of his forgiving love Joseph did. 2. *How it was received.* (1) With *surprise.* This was only to be expected. It must have fallen on Joseph's brethren like a thunderbolt. It manifestly struck them into silence. "They could not answer him." (2) With *alarm.* Apprehending vengeance, they were "troubled at his presence," and involuntarily shrank from before him. (3) With *pain.* They were grieved and angry with themselves, not that Joseph was alive, but that ever he had been sold. Many a time during the past years, and in particular since their first visit to Egypt, they had mourned over their sin against the child of Rachel. Now the anguish of their self-reproach was almost more than they could bear. And this was the best sign of its sincerity, that it was intensified rather than diminished by the sight of Joseph (cf. Zech. xii. 10). True penitence, as distinguished from remorse, is sorrow for sin, irrespective altogether of its consequences.

II. The commission. 1. *To carry an invitation.* "Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, and tarry not." 2. *To deliver a promise.* "And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen," and "there will I nourish thee." 3. *To explain a reason.* "For yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty." 4. *To provide an authentication.* "And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that

speaketh unto you." 5. *To supply an encouragement.* "And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt." 6. *To return with an answer.* "And ye shall haste and bring down my father hither."

III. THE RECONCILIATION. 1. *With tears of joy.* "He fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck." Over the rest of his brothers also as they bowed before him "he wept." 2. *With kisses of love.* "Moreover he kissed all his brethren"—not even forgetting Simeon, who probably had bound him. 3. *With words of cheer.* "After that his brethren talked with him."

Lessons:—See in the character of Joseph, as portrayed in this touching scene, a brilliant constellation of heavenly virtues and holy graces. 1. Of fraternal affection in his tender dealing with his brethren. 2. Of filial piety in his considerate regard for his father. 3. Of eminent devotion in recognising the hand of God in all his past fortunes. 4. Of exquisite sensibility in being so quickly moved to tears.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—15.—*Darkness turned into light.* Joseph's revelation of himself to his brethren in the atmosphere of the purest brotherly affection and grateful acknowledgment of Divine goodness. Only small natures are ashamed of tears. At first the men who had a great sin upon their consciences were only troubled at the presence of their injured brother, but soon the free and full manifestation of his love turns all their fears into rejoicing. Joseph wept for joy at their return to him, and they were henceforth his brethren indeed. Although for a time we carry the burden of our sins and feel their weight, even though we believe that they are forgiven, still as God reveals himself to us and surrounds us more and more with the embrace of his love, we lose the constraint of our painful remembrance, and rejoice with all our hearts in present peace and future glory.—R.

Ver. 3.—*The great announcement.* Not a stranger, but a brother. Yet they were slow to receive comfort from it. The fact beyond all expectation; the suspicion of the unknown ruler attaching itself to the newly-found brother; the remembrance of their own former cruelty; the doubt whether indeed the past were forgiven, combined to make them "troubled at his presence." Akin to this is the slowness with which the great revelation of the gospel is received, our adoption as sons (Gal. iv. 5) through our brotherhood with Christ; members of Christ, and thus children of God. Not the doctrine, for we are familiar with its terms, but the practical reception of it. The gospel preached is "good-will to men;" the foundation on which it rests is the work whereby the eternal Son became our brother and representative (2 Cor. v. 14). The means of appropriation, belief that God has indeed done this thing for us (Matt. xi. 28). Yet even to those who are longing for peace and salvation the message often seems to bring no real comfort. The truth of the doctrine is admitted, but Jesus is not recognised as a personal, present Saviour. There is a feeling that something not declared lies behind; that there is some unexplained "if," some condition to be fulfilled, some part of the work to be done, ere it can be safe to trust. Conscious of sin, they do not fully receive the offer as made to them such as they are. The fact is, men often want to begin at the wrong end; to make some worthy offering to God ere they have it to give (cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 7); want to gather fruit ere the tree is planted; to build a spiritual house ere the foundation is laid.

I. GOD'S OFFER PRECEDES FAITH. The gospel proclaims a fact—Christ crucified for us, the fulfilment of Isa. liii. 5. Its primary message is not of something to follow our faith, but of that on which our faith rests. The "foundation" of spiritual life is not our belief but Christ's work (1 Cor. iii. 11). But in practice many seem to regard the right to trust in Christ's work as depending on their being in a fitting state of mind. And thus their mind is turned away from Christ to their own state (cf. Matt. xiv. 30). No doubt there must be a conviction of need ere the Saviour can be welcomed (Matt. ix. 12). But the evidence of that conviction is not our feelings but laying our burden upon the Lord.

II. GOD'S OFFER MUST BE RECEIVED BY FAITH—that is, it must be accepted as it is made; not something else put in its place. God's message is, Trust in Christ.

To do this is to exercise faith. But the answer often is, I must first see whether I have faith. It is as if when our Lord bade the impotent arise, he had answered, I must first feel that I have the power. Faith depends not on accurate knowledge. The gospel is for the ignorant; and what it claims is that we receive it according to the measure of our knowledge, guided by those means of instruction which we possess.

III. GOD'S OFFER IS TO MAKE US WHAT WE OUGHT TO BE. Christ accepted, trusted, is made unto us wisdom, &c. (1 Cor. i. 30). Faith leads to more communion with Christ. The Bible becomes a living voice instead of a dead letter. Channels of knowledge are opened, and daily increasing powers are given where the will is to be really Christ's (John vi. 68).—M.

Ver. 5.—*Providence.* "Now therefore be not grieved," &c. I. THE END IS GOODNESS AND MERCY. 1. To preserve life. 2. To set the seed of the better society in the midst of the corruptions and imperfections of the old. 3. To prepare the way for the higher revelations of the future.

II. GOD'S METHOD OF INSTRUMENTALITIES HIS GLORY. 1. The history of his people, their persecutions, their apparent humiliations, their marvellous victories. 2. The transformation of men, whereby enemies are made friends, &c. 3. The biographies of distinguished servants of God illustrate his grace in bestowing fitness for appointed work.

III. MYSTERIES LOOKED AT FROM A HIGHER POINT OF VIEW BECOME REVELATIONS. 1. *Time* a great revealer. Wait for the Lord. 2. The narrow circle of a family history taken up into the higher sphere of Divine purposes concerning nations and humanity itself. 3. Ultimate vindication of the spiritual men and spiritual principles as against the merely earthly and selfish aims of individuals or communities.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 16.—**And the fame thereof**—literally, *the voice*, hence rumour (cf. Jer. iii. 9)—**was heard in Pharaoh's house** (having been brought thither doubtless by some of the Court officials), **saying, Joseph's brethren**—it is probable that they would style him Zaphnath-paaneah (cf. ch. xli. 45)—**are come** (*i. e.* are arrived in Egypt): **and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants**—literally, *it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants* (cf. ch. xli. 37). The LXX. render *ἐχάρη δὲ Φαραὼ*; the Vulgate, *gavisus est Pharao*, i. e. Pharaoh was glad.

Vers. 17, 18.—**And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me.** This may have been an independent invitation given by the Egyptian king to Joseph's relatives; but it is more than likely that Joseph had already told him of the proposal he had made to his brethren, and that he here receives a royal confirmation of the same). **And I will give you the good of the land of Egypt,**—*i. e.* the best part of the land, viz., Goshen (Rosenmüller, Lange, and others); though the phrase is probably synonymous with that which follows—**and ye shall eat the fat of the land.** The fat of the land meant either the richest and most fertile portion of it (Lange, Kalisch), or the best and choicest of its productions (Gesenius, Keil). Cf. Deut. xxxii. 14; Ps. cxlvii. 14.

Vers. 19, 20.—**Now thou art commanded, this do ye;**—an apostrophe to Joseph, Pharaoh manifestly regarding the cause of Joseph and his brethren as one (Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, and others)—**take you wagons out of the land of Egypt**—the carriages here referred to (עֲגָלוֹת, from עָגַל to roll) were small two-wheeled vehicles suitable for a flat country like Egypt, or for traversing roadless deserts. They were usually drawn by cattle, and employed for carrying agricultural produce. Herodotus mentions a four-wheeled car which was used for transporting the shrine and image of a deity (ii. 63; *vide* Rawlinson's edition, and note by Sir G. Wilkinson)—**for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.** Pharaoh meant them to understand that they had not only Joseph's invitation, but his (Pharaoh's) commandment, to encourage them to undertake so serious a project as the removal of their households to Egypt. **Also regard not your stuff**—literally, *and your eyes shall not* (i. e. let them not) *grieve for your utensils* (i. e. articles of domestic furniture), *although you should require to leave them behind* (LXX.,

Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, *et alii*). The rendering of the Vulgate, *nec dimittatis quicquid de supellectili vestra*, conveys a meaning exactly the opposite of the true one, which is thus correctly expressed by Dathius: *Nec ægre ferrent jacturam supellectilis suæ.* **For the good of all the land of Egypt is yours**—literally, *to you it* (*sc.* shall belong).

Ver. 21.—**And the children** (better, sons) **of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment** (literally, *the mouth*) **of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.**

Ver. 22.—**To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment**;—literally, *alterations of garments*, i. e. changes or suits of dress (Judges xiv. 12, 13; 2 Kings v. 5); probably dress clothes for special occasions (Keil, Lange, Murphy); *δισσὰς στολὰς* (LXX.); *binas stolas* (Vulgate)—**but** (literally, *and*) **to Benjamin he gave**—not to make amends for having given him a fright (Lange), but as a special token of fraternal affection (Murphy)—**three hundred** pieces **of silver,**—literally, *three hundred of silver* (cf. ch. xliii. 44)—**and five changes of raiment**—which renders it probable that the brothers only received two.

Ver. 23.—**And to his father he sent after this** manner; **ten asses** (*vide* ch. xii. 16) **laden with** (literally, *carrying*) **the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with** (or carrying) **corn and bread and meat**—probably prepared meats, some sort of delicacy (Clarke)—**for his father by the way.**

Ver. 24.—**So** (literally, *and*) **he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.** The verb רָגַז signifies to be moved or disturbed with any violent emotion, but in particular with anger (Prov. xxix. 9; Isa. xxviii. 21; cf. Sanscr. *rag*, to move oneself, Gr. ὀργή, anger, Lat. *frango*, Ger. *regen*), and is here generally understood as an admonition against quarrelling (LXX., μὴ ὀργίζεσθε; Vulgate, *ne irascimini* (Calvin, Dathius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy, Lange, Alford, *et alii*), although by others (Tuch, Baumgarten, Michaelis, Gesenius, Kalisch) it is regarded as a dissuasive against fear of any future plot on the part of Joseph.

Vers. 25—28.—**And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he** (literally, *and that he;* an emphatic assurance which Keil, following Ewald, renders by "yea," and Kalisch by "indeed") **is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's** (literally, *his*, i. e. Jacob's) **heart fainted** (literally, *grew chill*, the primary idea of the root being that of rigidity through coldness; cf. πηγνύω, to be rigid, and *pigeo*, *rigeo*, *frigeo*, to be chill. The sense is that Jacob's heart seemed to stop with amazement at the tidings which his sons brought), **for he believed them not.** This was scarcely a case of believing not for joy (Bush), but rather of incredulity arising from suspicion, both of the messengers and their message, which was only removed by further explanation, and in particular by the sight of Joseph's splendid presents and commodious carriages. **And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them**:—*i. e.* about Joseph's invitation and promise (vers. 9—11) — **and when he saw the wagons**—probably royal vehicles (Wordsworth)—**which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived** (literally, *lived;* it having been previously numb and cold, as if dead): **and Israel said,**—the change of name here is significant. The sublime theocratic designation, which had dropped into obscurity during the period of the old man's sorrow for his lost son, revives with the resuscitation of his dead hope (cf. ch. xliii. 6)—**It is enough** (one word, as if expressing his complacent satisfaction); **Joseph my son is yet alive** (this is the one thought that fills his aged heart): **I will go down**—"The old man is young again in spirit; he is for going immediately; he could leap; yes, fly" (Lange) —**and see him** (a sight of Joseph would be ample compensation for all the years of sorrow he had passed through) **before I die.** He would then be ready to be gathered to his fathers.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 16—28.—*Joseph's invitation to Jacob.* I. AUTHORISED BY PHARAOH. Though possessed of the liberty to issue such a commission as he had just intrusted to his brethren, Joseph felt that it would be right and proper to have his sovereign's sanction. Accordingly, on mentioning the matter to the king, the required consent was—1. *Immediately obtained.* "Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me." It was also—2. *Sincerely given*, as was attested by the royal order to take Egyptian curricles in order to convey the immigrants. "Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come." And, still further, it was—

3. *Warmly urged*, by a handsome promise—"I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land"—and an earnest exhortation—"Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

II. ATTESTED BY JOSEPH. Had the sincerity of Joseph stood in need of any demonstration, it would at once have been supplied by—1. The *splendid carriages* he sent from Egypt to convey his father. That they had such an influence upon the heart of Jacob is apparent from the narrative. At first the old man could not bring himself to credit the report which his sons brought; but when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 2. The *valuable presents* he bestowed upon his brethren and sent to his father: to each of the ten "changes of raiment;" to Benjamin 300 pieces of silver and five "changes of raiment;" to his father ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. Gifts such as these were an index to the love which dwelt in Joseph's heart. 3. The *good counsel* he addressed to his brethren: "See that ye fall not out by the way." It was not likely if they disagreed among themselves that they would execute successfully the great commission Joseph had intrusted to them. It was a token of his anxiety for their accomplishing his mission that they should unitedly and lovingly address themselves to its performance.

III. REPORTED BY THE BRETHREN. On arriving at Hebron in the land of Canaan the sons of Jacob hastened to unburden themselves of their marvellous intelligence. The invitation of Joseph was detailed—1. *Faithfully*. On the last occasion on which they had returned to Hebron with tidings concerning Joseph they had lied, and their father believed them; this time, although the old man believed not, what they said was true: "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt," adding that he wished his venerable parent to go down to Egypt beside him. 2. *Fully*. "They told him all the words of Joseph which he had said unto them," not forgetting to deliver him the presents, and point him to the wagons or royal carriages which his son had sent for his conveyance thither.

IV. ACCEPTED BY JACOB. The strange tale to which the old man listened seemed on its first hearing to be incredible. Such a shock did it give to his feeble sensibilities that his heart almost stopped its beating. Apprehending that they were only mocking his already aged and bereaved spirit, he believed them not. But at length the splendid carriages carried conviction to his mind, and he believed—1. *With holy satisfaction*. "It is enough." Since this was true, he had no desires unsatisfied below. 2. *With paternal love*. "Joseph my son" (what tenderness in the words!) "is yet alive." 3. *With simple confidence*. "I will go down and see him before I die."

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 16—28.—*The grace of God to his people*. We are now dealing no longer with Joseph's personal history, but brought out into the larger sphere of "*the children of Israel*" (ver. 21). Already it may be said the Egyptian period in the history of the children of Israel has commenced. Pharaoh comes upon the scene and his servants. All the wealth of Egypt is placed at the command of Israel. The men who had been the transgressors against Joseph are now the mediators of the great change in the condition and prospects of the Israelitish race. The effect upon the old man's heart.—R.

Vers. 25—28.—*The believer led to his reward*. Jacob's incredulity conquered. His spirit revived. His resolution taken.

I. OUR ENJOYMENT OF WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR US IS DEPENDENT UPON OUR CONFIDENT BELIEF AND EXPECTATION. 1. Separation from the old for the new life involves a struggle with self, with circumstances, with fellow-men. 2. The future must be laid hold of. We must believe that the better place is prepared for us, that the will of God is good.

II. WE GAIN THE VICTORY OVER NATURAL FEARS, DOUBTS, AND DIFFICULTIES WHEN WE SIMPLY LOOK AT THE FACTS AS GOD HAS SET THEM BEFORE US, BOTH IN HIS WORD AND IN HIS PROVIDENCE. The men were deceivers. The facts, the wagons, the good things, the blessings plainly sent of God, earnest of the future, would not deceive.

III. The true faith is that which gratefully accepts the invitation of Divine grace, acting upon it, both by the decision of the will and by the devotion of the life. "*It is enough, I will go.*"

IV. The reward which is prepared for the true obedience is much greater than we can anticipate. To *see Joseph* was the patriarch's anticipation. The purpose of God was much larger for him. Joseph and Jacob met in the abundance of Egypt. The earthly pilgrimage leads to the true Goshen. "*It is enough.*" We follow the voice of our God. It hath not entered into our heart to conceive what is before us.—R.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Ver. 1.—**And Israel** (as the head of the theocratic family) **took his journey**—literally, *broke up*, sc. his encampment (cf. ch. xii. 9)—**with all that he had, and came**—from Hebron (ch. xxxvii. 14)—**to Beersheba,** —where Abraham (ch. xxi. 33) and Isaac (ch. xxvi. 25) had both sojourned for considerable periods, and erected altars to Jehovah—**and offered sacrifices unto the God** (the Elohim) **of his father Isaac.** Probably giving thanks to God for the tidings concerning Joseph (Ainsworth); consulting God about his journey to Egypt (Rosenmüller); it may be, pouring out before God his fear as well as gratitude and joy, more especially if he thought about the stern prophecy (ch. xv. 13) which had been given to Abraham (Kalisch); perhaps commending himself and family to the care of his covenant God (Keil), and certainly praying that God would confirm to him and his the covenant which had been made with his fathers (Calvin).

Ver. 2.—**And God** (Elohim) **spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob**—the name Jacob being employed probably to remind Jacob of what he had been (Lawson, Bush, Wordsworth), and repeated *ut magis attentus reddatur* (Calvin). **And he said, Here** am I—literally, *behold me* (cf. ch. xxii. 1).

Ver. 3.—**And he said, I** am **God, the God of thy father**—literally, *I am the El* (the Mighty One), *the Elohim of thy father*. Though in consequence of this phrase the section (vers. 1—7), indeed the entire chapter, is usually assigned to the Elohist (Tuch, Bleek, Vaihinger), yet the contents of this theophany are felt to be so substantially Jehovistic in their import (Hengstenberg), that certain critics have been constrained to give verses 1—5 to the Jehovist (Colenso), or, omitting the last clause of ver. 5, to the redactor (Davidson). In ch. xxviii. 13 the designation used is "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father." As on that former occasion when setting out for Padan-aram, so now, when departing for Egypt, he receives a comforting assurance. **Fear not to go down into Egypt.** There was reason for Jacob's apprehensions, since Abraham had been in peril in the land of the Pharaohs (ch. xii. 14—20), Isaac had been forbidden to go thither (ch. xxvi. 2), and Egypt had been foreshadowed as a place of servitude for his descendants (ch. xv. 13). מֵרְדָה is an irregular infinitive רְדָה for רֶדֶת (cf. דֵּעָה for דַּעַת, Exod. ii. 4), with מִן prefixed after a verb of fearing (*vide* Ewald's 'Heb. Synt.,' § 336). **For I will there make of thee a great nation** —literally, *for to a great nation will I put thee there* (cf. ch. xxi. 13). Jacob had previously received the injunction, accompanied by the Divine benediction, to be fruitful and multiply (ch. xxviii. 3). Twice over had it previously been predicted that he should develop into a multitudinous people (ch. xxviii. 14; xxxv. 11). The present promise was an indication that the fulfilment of the prophecy was at hand.

Ver. 4.—**I will go down with thee into Egypt;**—not a proof that the Hebrews believed in a local deity following them when they changed their abodes, and confined to the district in which they happened for the time being to reside (Tuch, Bohlen), but simply a metaphorical expression for the efficiency and completeness of the Divine protection (Kalisch)—**and I will also surely bring thee up again** (literally, *and I will bring thee up also, bringing thee up;* a double emphasis lying in the use of the infinitive absolute, with גַּם preceding, as in ch. xxxi. 15, meaning that God would assuredly recover his body for interment in Canaan should he die in Egypt, and his descendants for settlement in the land of their inheritance): **and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes**—*i. e.* will perform for thee the last offices of affection by closing thine eyes in death, a service upon which the human heart in all ages and countries has set the highest value (*vide* Homer, 'Il.,' xi. 453; 'Odys.,' xxiv. 294; Virg., 'Æn.,' ix. 487; Ovid, 'Epist.,' i. 162). "A father at the point of death is always very desirous that his wife, children, and grandchildren should be with him. Should there be one at a distance, he will be immediately sent for, and

until he arrive the father will mourn and complain, 'My son, will you not come? I cannot die without you.' When he arrives, he will take the hands of his son, and kiss them, and place them on his eyes, his face, and mouth, and say, 'Now I die.'" (Roberts' 'Oriental Illustrations,' p. 52).

Vers. 5—7.—**And Jacob rose up**—having received new vigour from the vision (Calvin) —**from Beersheba** (it is not probable that his stay there was of more than a day or two's, perhaps only a night's, duration): **and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives,**—"Unlike the heathen tribes around them, and Oriental nations generally, the family of Jacob gave honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel" (Lawson)—**in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him** (*vide* ch. xlv. 19, 21). **And they took their cattle, and their goods** (including probably their servants), **which they had gotten in the land of Canaan,**—"Pharaoh had desired Jacob not to regard his stuff, because the good of all the land of Egypt was before him; but he wished not to take advantage of Pharaoh's goodness, or to owe greater obligations to him than he found necessary" (Lawson)—**and came into Egypt,**—a scene depicted on the tomb of Chnumhotep, the near relative and successor of Osirtasen I., at Beni-hassan, represents a company of immigrants, apparently Shemitic in their origin, entering Egypt with their goods, as well as women and children, borne upon asses. Without affirming that this was the Egyptian version of the descent of Israel into Egypt, it may serve as a striking illustration of that event (*vide* Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. p. 480, ed. 1878; Brugsch, 'Histoire d'Egypte,' p. 63; Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 37)—**Jacob, and all his seed** (*i. e.* his descendants) **with him: his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters** (this need not imply that Jacob had more daughters than Dinah, but may include his sons' wives, who are not otherwise mentioned in this enumeration), **and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.** The date of this event was in the 130th year of Jacob's life (ch. xlvii. 9), and 215 years after the call of Abraham (ch. xii. 4), *i. e.* B. C. 1728 (Usher), 1885 (Hales); or A. M. 2276 (Usher), 3526 (Hales).

Ver. 8.—**And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt.** The phrase "which came into Egypt" must obviously be construed with some considerable latitude, since in the appended list of seventy persons, "souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt," are reckoned Joseph, who undoubtedly came into Egypt, but not with Jacob, Hezron and Hamul, the sons of Pharez, as well as the descendants of Benjamin, who probably, and Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph, who certainly, were born in Egypt. **Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.**

Ver. 9.—**And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch,**—"Initiated or Dedicated;" the name also of Cain's firstborn (ch. iv. 17), and of the son of Jared (ch. v. 19)—**and Phallu,** —"Distinguished" (Gesenius)—**and Hezron,** —"Enclosed" (Gesenius), "Of the Court or Village" (Murphy), "Blooming One" (Fürst)—**and Carmi,**—"Vine-dresser" (Gesenius, Murphy), "Noble One" (Fürst).

Ver. 10.—**And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel,**—"Day of El" (Gesenius, Murphy); in 1 Chron. iv. 24, Nemuel—**and Jamin,**— "Right Hand" (Gesenius, Murphy)—**and Ohad,**—"Joined together" (Gesenius, Murphy)—**and Jachin,**—"Whom God strengthens" (Gesenius), "He shall establish" (Murphy), or Jarib (1 Chron. iv. 24)—**and Zohar,**—"Whiteness" (Gesenius, Murphy); named Zerah (1 Chron. iv. 24)—**and Shaul,**— "Asked for" (Gesenius)—**the son of a Canaanitish woman.** The wives of the other sons, except Judah, were probably from Mesopotamia.

Ver. 11.—**And the sons of Levi; Gershon,** —or Gershom,—"Expulsion" (Gesenius),— **Kohath,** or Kehath,—"Assembly" (Gesenius)—**and Merari,**—"Bitter," "Unhappy" (Gesenius), "Flowing" (Murphy), "Harsh One" (Lange).

Ver. 12.—**And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah** (*vide* ch. xxxviii. 3), **and Pharez, and Zarah** (ch. xxxviii. 29; 1 Chron. ii. 4): **but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan** (ch. xxxviii. 7, 10). **And the sons of Pharez were Hezron** (*vide* on ver. 9) **and Hamul,**—"One who has experienced mercy" (Gesenius).

Ver. 13.—**And the sons of Issachar; Tola,** —"Worm," "Scarlet" (Gesenius)—**and Phuvah,**—"Mouth"? (Gesenius)—**and Job,** —perhaps an incorrect reading for Jashub ("Turning Oneself"), as in Numb. xxvi. 24; 1 Chron. vii. 1 (Gesenius), which the LXX. adopts—**and Shimron,**—"Watch" (Gesenius).

Ver. 14.—**And the sons of Zebulun; Sered,**—"Fear" (Gesenius)—**and Elon,**— "Oak"—**and Jahleel,**—"Whom God has made sick" (Gesenius).

Ver. 15.—**These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram** (*i. e.* the descendants of Leah's sons which were born in Padan-aram), **with his daughter Dinah** (who probably had continued unmarried after her misfortune in Shechem, and is here mentioned as an independent member of Jacob's family): **all the souls of his sons and his daughters** (reckoning himself, and excluding Er and Onan) were **thirty and three.**

Ver. 16.—**And the sons of Gad; Ziphion,**—

"Expectation" (Gesenius); Zephon (Numb. xxvi. 15)—**and Haggi,**—"Festive" (Gesenius)—**Shuni,** — "Quiet" (Gesenius) — **and Ezbon,**—"Toiling" (Murphy); named Ozni (Numb. xxvi. 16)—**Eri,**—"Guarding" (Gesenius) — **and Arodi,** — "Wild Ass" (Gesenius), "Rover" (Murphy), "Descendants" (Lange); styled Arod (Numb. xxvi. 17)—**and Areli**—"Lion of El" (Murphy), "Son of a Hero" (Gesenius), "Heroic" (Lange).

Ver. 17.—**And the sons of Asher; Jimnah,** —"Prosperity" (Gesenius)—**and Ishuah,**— "Even," "Level" (Gesenius)—**and Isui,**— "Even," "Level" (Gesenius): they may have been twins — **and Beriah,**—"Gift" (Gesenius), "In Evil" (Murphy) — **and Serah**—"Abundance" (Gesenius), "Overflow" (Murphy)—**their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber,** — "Fellowship" (Gesenius)—**and Malchiel**—"King of El" (Gesenius, Murphy), "My king is El" (Lange).

Ver. 18.—**These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob,** even **sixteen souls.**

Ver. 19.—**The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife** (cf. ch. xliv. 27); **Joseph and Benjamin.**

Ver. 20.—**And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him** (*vide* ch. xli. 50). The LXX., having probably transferred them from 1 Chron. vii. 14, append the words, *'Εγένοντο δε υἱοὶ Μανασσῆ, οὓς ἔτεκεν αὐτῷ ἡ παλλακὴ ἡ Συρα τὸν Μαχίρ. Μαχὶρ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Γαλαάδ. Υἱοὶ δὲ 'Εφραϊμ ἀδελφοῦ Μανασσῆ· Σουταλααμ και Ταάμ-Υἱοὶ δε Σουταλαὰμ 'Εδώμ.* Since they are not to be found in the Samaritan text, Rosenmüller thinks they may have been originally written on the margin, and thence by some subsequent copyist transferred to the text.

Ver. 21.—**And the sons of Benjamin** were **Belah,** — "Devouring" (Gesenius); the ancient name of Zoar, one of the cities in the Jordan circle (ch. xiv. 2)—**and Becher,**—"a Young Camel" (Gesenius)—**and Ashbel,**— "Opinion of God" (Gesenius), "Sprout" (Lange), "Short"? (Murphy) —**Gera,** — "a Grain" (Gesenius), "Fighter"? (Lange)— **and Naaman,** — "Pleasantness" (Gesenius) —**Ehi,**—"Brotherly" (Lange, Murphy); = Ehud, "Joining together" (Gesenius), 1 Chron. viii. 6; styled Ahiram (Numb. xxvi. 38)—**and Rosh,**—"Head" (Gesenius)—**Muppim,**—"Adorned One" (Lange); = Shupham (Numb. xxvi. 38) and Shephupham (1 Chron. viii. 5), "Serpent"? (Gesenius)—**and Huppim,**—"Coverings" (Gesenius), or Hupham (Numb. xxvi. 39) — **and Ard**—"Fugitive," "Rover" (Murphy), "Ruler"? (Lange). In Numb. xxvi. 40 Naaman and Ard are given as the sons of Bela, and the grandsons of Benjamin; a plausible explanation of which is that Benjamin's sons died early, and were replaced in the list of heads of families by two of Bela's sons who had been named after them (Keil, Murphy, Inglis, *et alii*). In the same table of *mishpachoth* the names of Becher, Gera, and Rosh have been omitted, and that probably for a similar reason—that they died either without issue, or without a number of descendants large enough to form independent families.

Ver. 22.—**These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls** were **fourteen.**

Ver. 23.—**And the sons of Dan; Hushim** —"Those who make haste" (Gesenius); designated Shuham in Numb. xxvi. 42.

Ver. 24.—**And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel,**—"Allotted by God" (Gesenius)—**and Guni,** — "Painted" (Gesenius), "Dyed" (Murphy), "Protected" (Lange)—**and Jezer,** —"Image," "Form" (Gesenius, Lange, Murphy) — **and Shillem** — "Retribution" (Gesenius), "Avenger" (Lange).

Ver. 25.—**These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls** were **seven.**

Vers. 26, 27.—**All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls** were **threescore and six; and the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt,** were **two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt,** were **threescore and ten.** According to the LXX. the number of Joseph's sons was nine; and the number of those who came with Jacob into Egypt seventy-five, a number adopted by Stephen (Acts vii. 14). The apparent confusion in these different numbers, sixty-six, seventy, seventy-five, will disappear if it be observed that the first takes no account of Jacob, Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim, while they are as palpably included in the second computation, and that Stephen simply adds to the seventy of ver. 27 the five grandsons of Joseph who are mentioned in the Septuagint version, from which he quoted, or to the sixty-six of ver. 26 the nine mentioned above, consisting of Jacob, Joseph, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Joseph's five grandsons, thus making seventy-five in all. There is thus no irreconcilable contradiction between the Hebrew historian and the Christian orator.

Ver. 28.—**And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph** (the noble qualities displayed by Judah had manifestly secured, as they had certainly merited, the affectionate admiration and hearty confidence of the aged patriarch), **to direct his face unto Goshen;**—*i. e.* that Joseph might supply him with the necessary instructions for conducting the

pilgrims to their appointed settlement (Dathius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Ainsworth, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), rather than that Joseph might meet him in Goshen (LXX., Vulgate, Samaritan, Kalisch)—**and** (having received the necessary directions) **they came into the land of Goshen.** The LXX. read εἰς γῆν Ῥαμεσσῆ, as in ch. xlvii. 11.

Ver. 29.—**And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him;**—literally, *he* (i. e. Joseph) *appeared* (the niph. form of the verb, which is commonly used of the appearance of God or his angels, being here employed to indicate the glory in which Joseph came to meet his father: Keil) *unto him*, viz., Jacob—**and he fell on his neck,**—*i. e.* Joseph fell upon Jacob's neck (LXX., Vulgate, Calvin, Dathe, Keil, and commentators generally), though Maimonides regards Jacob as the subject of the verb *fell*—**and wept on his neck a good while**—in undoubted transports of joy, feeling his soul by those delicious moments abundantly recompensed for all the tears he had shed since he parted from his father in Hebron, upwards of twenty years before.

Ver. 30.—**And Israel** (realising something of the same holy satisfaction as he trembled in his son's embrace) **said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art still alive**—literally, *I will die this time, after I have seen thy face, that* (Keil, Kalisch), *or since, thou art still alive;* the meaning of the patriarch being that, since with his own eyes he was now assured of Joseph's happiness, he had nothing more to live for, the last earthly longing of his heart having been completely satisfied, and was perfectly prepared for the last scene of all—ready, whenever God willed, to be gathered to his fathers.

Vers. 31, 32.—**And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up** (employed in ver. 29 to describe a journey from the interior of the country to the desert, or Canaan, the verb עָלָה is here used in a courtly sense to signify a visit to a sovereign or superior), **and shew Pharaoh** (literally, *relate, or tell, to Pharaoh*), **and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which** were **in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; and the men are shepherds** (literally, *keepers of flocks*), **for their trade hath been to feed cattle** (literally, *they are men of cattle*); **and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.**

Vers. 33, 34.—**And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?** Pharaoh's inquiry was characteristically Egyptian, being rendered necessary by the strict distinction of castes that then prevailed. According to a law promulgated by Amasis, a monarch of the 26th dynasty, every Egyptian was obliged to give a yearly account to the monarch or State governor of how he lived, with the certification that if he failed to show that he possessed an honourable calling (δικαίην ζόην) he should be put to death (Herod., ii. 177). **That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle** (literally, *men of cattle are thy servants*) **from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen.** Joseph probably desired his brethren to settle in Goshen for three reasons. (1) It was suitable for their flocks and herds; (2) it would secure their isolation from the Egyptians; and (3) it was contiguous to Canaan, and would be easier vacated when the time arrived for their return. **For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.** These are obviously the words not of Joseph, but of the historian, and their accuracy is strikingly corroborated by Herodotus (ii. 47, 164), who affirms that the swine-herds, one of the seven castes, classes, or guilds into which the Egyptians were divided, were regarded with such abhorrence that they were not allowed to enter a temple or contract marriage with any others of their countrymen; and by existing monuments, which show that though the statement of Josephus ('Ant.,' ii. 7, 5) is incorrect that "the Egyptians were prohibited from meddling with the keeping of sheep," yet those who tended cattle were greatly despised, Egyptian artists evincing the contempt in which they were held by frequently representing them as either lame or deformed, dirty and unshaven, and sometimes of a most ludicrous appearance (*vide* Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. p. 444, ed. 1878). It has been thought that the disrepute in which the shepherd guild was held by the Egyptians was attributable partly to the nature of their occupation, and partly to the feeling excited against them by the domination of the shepherd kings (Wilkinson, Wordsworth, Murphy, and others); but (1) while this might account for their dislike to foreign shepherds, it would not explain their antipathy to native shepherds; (2) if, as some think, Joseph's Pharaoh was one of the shepherd kings, it is not likely that this rooted prejudice against shepherds would then be publicly expressed, however violently it might afterwards explode; (3) there is good reason for believing that the descent into Egypt occurred at a period much earlier than the shepherd kings. Hence the explanation of this singular antipathy to shepherds or wandering nomads has been sought in the fact that the Egyptians were essentially an agricultural people, who associated ideas of rudeness and barbarism with the

very name of a shepherd (Hengstenberg, Keil, Kurtz), perhaps because from a very early period they had been exposed on their Eastern boundary to incursions from such nomadic shepherds (Rosenmüller), and perhaps also because from their occupation shepherds were accustomed to kill the animals held sacred by the other classes of the community (Kalisch).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—34.—*The descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt.* I. THE DEPARTURE FROM CANAAN (vers. 1—7). 1. *The journey to Beersheba.* Distant from Hebron somewhere over twenty miles, Beersheba lay directly in the way to Egypt. Yet doubtless the chief motive for halting at "the well of the oath" consisted in the fact that it had been, so to speak, consecrated by the previous encampments of Abraham and Isaac, by the altars they had there erected, and the revelations they had there enjoyed. It is both pleasurable and profitable to visit scenes and places that have been hallowed by the saints of former days; and though now under the Christian dispensation it is true that every place is holy ground, yet few there are who do not feel their religious emotions quickened when they stand upon some sacred spot where holy men have walked and prayed, or saintly martyrs bled and died. 2. *The stoppage at Beersheba.* (1) The solemn act of worship—"Jacob offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac." This he did in obedience to Divine prescription, which had appointed the presentation of offerings as the only acceptable mode of worship, in imitation of the piety of his ancestors, in presence of his assembled household, in supplication of Divine direction with regard to his contemplated journey. (2) The midnight revelation. "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain," was Jehovah's word to Israel in a later day (Isa. xlv. 19); and certainly he never said so either to Jacob's ancestors or to Jacob himself. As formerly he had appeared to Abraham and to Isaac on this very spot, so now he appeared to their descendant; *solemnly*, in the visions of the night; *audibly*, speaking to him in a voice articulate and clear; *earnestly*, saying, Jacob, Jacob, to which Jacob answered, Here am I; and *graciously*, discovering himself as the covenant God of his father Isaac. (3) The encouraging exhortation—"Fear not to go down to Egypt." Abraham had been formerly reproved for going into Egypt, and Isaac prevented from following his example; but here Jacob is both permitted and advised to go. No saint can safely guide himself by following the example of another. What is God's will concerning one man may be the opposite concerning another. It is best to imitate the patriarch, and after asking God's counsel follow where he, his Spirit, word, or providence, may lead. (4) The fourfold promise: "I will there make of thee a great nation"—"I will surely go down with thee"—"I will also surely bring thee up again"—"and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes;" a promise of enlargement, protection, restoration, consolation; a promise, like all God's promises in the gospel, suited to the wants of his servant. 3. *The advance from Beersheba.* This took place with alacrity, for Jacob "rose up;" with unanimity, for they all went, carrying with them their wives and little ones; and with comfort, since they rode in Pharaoh's waggons; and with safety, for it is added that they "came into Egypt."

II. THE COMPANY OF THE TRAVELLERS (vers. 8—27). 1. *Their character.* (1) Descendants of Jacob. They came out of Jacob's loins. In the entire catalogue there is no name that cannot be traced down in a direct line from Jacob. (2) Immigrants into Egypt. The expression of course is used with a certain amount of latitude, since Joseph's sons were born in Egypt, and probably all the family of Benjamin. But the accuracy of the language may be defended on the principle that the historian represents the entire family as having done what was done by its head. (3) Ancestors of Israel. Jacob's sons were the heads of the tribes, and Jacob's grandsons of the families, that subsequently formed the nation. 2. *Their number.* (1) "All the souls were threescore and six;" (2) "all the souls of the house of Jacob were threescore and ten;" (3) according to Stephen the total of Jacob's kindred was "threescore and fifteen souls." For the reconciliation of these different accounts, see the Exposition.

III. The arrival at Egypt (vers. 28—34). 1. *The mission of Judah.* "And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph," that he (Joseph) "might direct his face unto Goshen." 2. *The coming of Joseph.* (1) Joseph and his father. Learning of Jacob's arrival, Joseph "made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen." It was not ostentation, but the impatience of love that caused Joseph to drive to Goshen in the royal chariot. Presenting himself before his aged parent, he falls upon his neck and weeps, unable for a good while to control his tears; while the old man is so overcome at having his long-lost Joseph once more in his embrace, that he is quite willing to depart: "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." (2) Joseph and his brethren. Informing them of his intention to report their arrival to Pharaoh, he explains to them that Pharaoh will inquire about their occupation, and directs them how to answer so as to secure their residence in Goshen; a mark of duplicity in Joseph according to some, but rather a proof of the kindly and fraternal interest he took in his brothers' welfare.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xlvi. 1—4; xlvi. 28—30; xlvii. 7—10.—*The three meetings.* I. Between Jacob and God. 1. A *gracious* meeting. In the visions of the night, at Beersheba, Jehovah, after a lapse of upwards of a quarter of a century, again makes known his presence to his servant. It was a signal act of gracious condescension on the part of God. 2. A *promised* meeting. As the God of Abraham and of Isaac, Jehovah had solemnly taken Jacob into covenant with himself, and engaged to be with him for guidance and succour wherever he might wander and whensoever he might need assistance; and such an occasion had manifestly arisen then in the experience of the patriarch. 3. A *solicited* meeting. It is more than likely this was the explanation of Jacob's sacrifices at Beersheba. He was asking God to come to him with counsel and help at the important crisis which had come upon him. 4. An *encouraging* meeting. Jacob got all that he desired and more—words of cheer and promises of love, that sufficed at once to dispel his fears and animate his hopes.

II. Between Jacob and Joseph. 1. A *longed-for* meeting. How earnestly father and son had yearned to behold one another we can imagine better than express. 2. An *expected* meeting. No doubt Joseph instructed Judah to inform Jacob that he (Joseph) would visit him at Goshen. 3. A *happy* meeting. Those who have passed through experiences in any degree similar to this of Joseph and Jacob meeting after many years, when each perhaps thought the other dead, will not be surprised at their emotion.

III. Between Jacob and Pharaoh. 1. An *interesting* meeting. Of age with (probable) youth, of poverty with wealth, of lowly birth (at least, comparatively) with regal dignity, of piety with superstition. 2. An *instructive* meeting. No doubt the monarch would learn something of Jacob's by-past history, and let us hope too of Jacob's God; and perhaps Jacob would discover something in what he heard from Pharaoh concerning Joseph that would lead him to recognise the Divine hand even more clearly than he did. 3. A *profitable* meeting. Pharaoh got a good man's blessing, and Jacob won a great man's smile.—W.

Vers. 1—7.—*God speaking in the visions of the night.* While there were providential intimations which were clear enough, still the direct revelation of God was necessary for Jacob's assurance. At Beersheba, the consecrated spot, Jacob offers sacrifices in the covenant spirit, and receives in return the message of the covenant God: "I will make of thee a great nation." "I will also surely bring thee up again," *i.e.* in thy descendants. The vision is not a mere personal matter for Jacob's consolation, it is another in the series of Divine revelations which are connected with the development of the covenant.—R.

Vers. 8—27.—*The beginning of the nation.* "The souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were threescore and ten." The number seventy became afterwards a symbolic number among the Israelites—as in the seventy elders of Moses, the seventy of the Sanhedrim, the seventy of the Alexandrian version of the Scriptures, the seventy disciples of the Lord, the seventy heathen nations of

the world according to the Jews. There may be something in the combination of numbers. Seventy is 7 × 10. Ten is the symbol of the complete development of humanity. Seven of perfection. Therefore seventy may symbolise the elect people of God as the hope of humanity—Israel in Egypt. In the twelve patriarchs and seventy souls we certainly see the foreshadowing of the Saviour's appointments in the beginning of the Christian Church. The small number of Israel in the midst of the great multitude of Egypt is a great encouragement to faith. "Who hath despised the day of small things?"—R.

Vers. 28—34.—*The meeting of the aged Jacob and his lost son Joseph.* I. FULFILMENT OF DIVINE PROMISES. Both father and son examples of grace. Reminding us of *Simeon*, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," &c. (*Judah* is sent forward to Joseph—again a distinction placed upon the royal tribe). The meeting of father and son takes place in *Goshen*. For the people of God, although *in* Egypt must not be *of* it.

II. SEPARATION and DISTINCTION from the heathen world — enforced from the beginning. The policy of Joseph again is a mingling together of—

III. SIMPLICITY and WISDOM. He does not attempt to conceal from Pharaoh the low caste of the shepherds, but he *trusts in God* that what was an abomination unto the Egyptians will be made by his grace acceptable. It was a preservation at the same time from intermarriage with Egyptians, and a security to the Israelites of the pastoral country of Goshen. It was better to suffer reproach with the people of God than to be received among the highest in the heathen land, at the cost of losing the sacredness of the chosen people. A lesson this on the importance of preserving ourselves "*unspotted from the world*."—R.

Vers. 3, 4.—*Guidance.* Convinced that Joseph really lived, Jacob's first impulse was to hasten to him. But at Beersheba, ere he left the land of Canaan, he sought guidance of God. The promise made him reminds of that at Bethel. Each on the occasion of leaving the land; each revealing God's protecting care. His presence is the only pledge of safety (cf. Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15). It was not a word for Jacob only. Had it been so it would have failed, for Jacob never returned to Canaan. It was like the promise to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 8; cf. Heb. xi. 9, 10). It was the assurance that God's word would not fail. Though he seemed to be leaving his inheritance, he was being led in the way appointed for its more complete possession. God was with him in all. This fully made known to us in Immanuel, without whom we can do nothing, but who by the Holy Spirit abides in his people (John xv. 4; xvi. 14).

I. JACOB'S EXAMPLE. Before taking a step of importance he solemnly drew near to God (cf. Neh. ii. 4; 2 Cor. xii. 8). Not even to see Joseph would he go without inquiring of the Lord. Christ by his Holy Spirit is to his people wisdom (1 Cor. i. 30). The habit of prayer for guidance, or for wisdom to discern the right way, rests on sure promises (Isa. xxx. 21; Luke xi. 13), and is a thoroughly practical resource. We look not for visions or direct manifestations. But guidance is given through channels infinitely varied, though our way may seem strange; and it may be long ere we find that our prayer has been all along answered in the course of events. Why so much neglect of this? so much uncertainty? Because often men do not really seek to be guided by God. Their real wish is to be led as they themselves wish.

II. They who would be sure of God's promises MUST LEAN ON HIS GUIDANCE. They may seem to be led far from what they hoped for. They would fain have great spiritual elevation, and are kept low. They would like to do great work, and are led through homely duties; to have great powers for God's service, and are made weak. The cross must be borne (Rev. iii. 19), and it is sure to take a form they do not like. Otherwise it would not be really a cross. Many would willingly endure pain or poverty if they might thereby gain fame.

III. GOD'S CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS. "I will go down with thee." The universe in its laws shows power, wisdom, and love. But what inspires trust is the confidence that each one is remembered and cared for by God, a confidence called forth by the human sympathy of Christ (Matt. ix. 36; Luke vii. 13; John xi. 35).—M.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Ver. 1.—**Then Joseph came**—literally, *and Joseph went*, up to the royal presence, as he had proposed (ch. xlvi. 31)—**and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan**;—as thou didst desire (ch. xlv. 17, 18)—**and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen** (*vide* ch. xlv. 10).

Ver. 2.—**And he took some of his brethren, even five men,**—literally, *from the end, or extremity, of his brethren;* not from the weakest, lest the king should select them for courtiers or soldiers (the Rabbis, Oleaster, Pererius, and others); or the strongest and most handsome, that the Egyptian monarch and his nobles might behold the dignity of Joseph's kindred (Lyra, Thostatus, and others); or the youngest and oldest, that the ages of the rest might be therefrom inferred (Calvin); but from the whole body of his brethren (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, *et alii*) he took five men—**and presented them unto Pharaoh** (cf. Acts vii. 13).

Ver. 3.—**And Pharaoh said unto his** (*i. e.* Joseph's) **brethren, What is your occupation?** (*vide* ch. xlvi. 33). **And they said unto Pharaoh,**—as directed (ch. xlvi. 34)—**Thy servants** are **shepherds, both we,** and **also our fathers.**

Ver. 4.—**They said moreover** (literally, *and they said*) **unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come**;—an unconscious fulfilment of an ancient prophecy (ch. xv. 13)—**for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks** (it was solely the extreme drought that had caused them for a season to vacate their own land); **for the famine is sore** (literally, *heavy*) **in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell** (literally, *and now might thy servants dwell, we pray*, the future having here the force of an optative) **in the land of Goshen.**

Vers. 5, 6.—**And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: the land of Egypt** is **before thee** (cf. ch. xx. 15); **in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell.** Wilkinson thinks it possible that Jacob's sons "may have asked and obtained a grant of land from the Egyptian monarch on condition of certain services being performed by themselves and their descendants" ('Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i. ch. ii. p. 35). **In the land of Goshen let them dwell.** Robinson (ch. i. 78, 79) speaks of the province of es-Shar-Kiyeh, which corresponds as nearly as possible with ancient Goshen, as being even in modern times (1736) exceedingly productive and thickly populated. **And if thou knowest any men of activity among them,**—literally, *and if thou knowest, and there be among them, men of strength—chayil*, from *chul*, to twist (εἱλύω ἑλίσσω), the idea being that of strength as of twisted rope—**then make them rulers over my cattle**—literally, *and thou shalt make them masters of cattle over that which belongs to me.* "The shepherds on an Egyptian estate were chosen by the steward, who ascertained their character and skill previous to their being appointed to so important a trust" (Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. p. 445, ed. 1878).

Ver. 7.—**And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh.** It has been thought that Jacob's presentation to the Egyptian king was deferred till after the monarch's interview with his sons because of the public and political character of that interview, relating as it did to the occupation of the land, while Jacob's introduction to the sovereign was of a purely personal and private description. **And Jacob**—in reply probably to a request from Pharaoh (Tayler Lewis), but more likely *suâ sponte*—**blessed Pharaoh.** Not simply extended to him the customary salutation accorded to kings (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Alford, and others), like the "May the king live for ever!" of later times (2 Sam. xvi. 16; 1 Kings i. 25; Dan. ii. 4; iii. 9, &c.), but, conscious of his dignity as a prophet of Jehovah, pronounced on him a heavenly benediction (Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary,' and others)—*hoc verbo non vulgaris et profana salutatio notatur, sed pia sanctaque servi Dei precatio* (Calvin).

Vers. 8, 9.—**And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?**—literally, *How many are the days of the years of thy life?* **And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage** (literally, *of my sojournings*, wanderings to and fro without any settled condition) **are an hundred and thirty years.** Since Joseph was now thirty-seven years of age (ch. xlv. 6), it is apparent that he was born in his father's ninety-first year; and since this event took place in the fourteenth year of Jacob's residence in Padan-aram (ch. xxx. 25), it is equally apparent that Jacob was seventy-seven years of age when he left Beersheba after surreptitiously securing the patriarchal blessing (ch. xxviii. 1). **Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.** As Jacob's life fell short of that of his ancestors in respect of duration (witness the 175 years

of Abraham, and the 180 of Isaac), so it greatly surpassed theirs in respect of the miseries that were crowded into it.

Ver. 10.—**And Jacob blessed Pharaoh** (as he had done on entering the royal presence), **and went out from before Pharaoh.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—10.—*Jacob and his sons before Pharaoh.* I. JOSEPH'S BRETHREN BEFORE PHARAOH (vers. 1—6). 1. *Their arrival announced* (ver. 1). "My father and brethren are come out of the land of Canaan, and behold they are in the land of Goshen." 2. *Their persons presented* (ver. 2). "He took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them to Pharaoh." The import of this selection of five is explained in the exposition. 3. *Their occupations declared* (ver. 3). In answer to the king's interrogation they replied that they were shepherds. They had no desire to deceive, although they had learnt that persons of their trades were not commonly regarded with favour. Joseph indeed had convinced them that in this instance honesty would be the best policy; but even had it been precisely the reverse there is no reason to suppose they would have attempted any sort of prevarication. 4. *Their purpose explained* (ver. 4). It was not their intention to settle permanently in Egypt, but only to find in it a temporary shelter during the years of famine. But while man proposes God disposes. 5. *Their wish stated* (ver. 4). "Now, therefore, let thy servants dwell in Goshen." Though Joseph might have had sufficient power to accord them this favour, it was only courteous to ask it from Pharaoh. "Honour to whom honour is due," is the dictate of right feeling as well as of true religion, and men seldom find themselves the losers by practising politeness. 6. *Their request granted* (ver. 6). Pharaoh at once responded—"The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell." Nay, Pharaoh even exceeded their desires or expectations. 7. *Their promotion indicated* (ver. 6). "If thou knowest any men of activity among them, make them rulers over my cattle." "Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before kings!"

II. JOSEPH'S FATHER BEFORE PHARAOH (vers. 7—11). 1. *The old man's blessing.* "And Jacob blessed Pharaoh." This was (1) a valuable gift. Once before he had sent a present to one whom he regarded as of vice-regal dignity; but now, when standing in the royal presence, he does not think of material offerings, but presents what must ever be beyond rubies, the intercession of a saintly heart with God on a fellow-creature's behalf. If the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, the simple benediction of an aged saint cannot profit little. (2) Earnestly given. This was shown by the promptitude with which it was bestowed. Immediately the venerable patriarch is ushered into the royal presence he breaks forth into the language of benediction, as if the inward emotion had just been trembling on the heart's lip and ready at the first agitation to overflow. And he for whom he prays was a benefactor indeed, but a monarch and a heathen; and so are Christ's people taught to pray for all men, for kings and such as are in authority, for unbelieving as well as believing, and not for friends and benefactors solely, but likewise for enemies and persecutors. (3) Solemnly confirmed. Spoken on the first entrance to the regal mansion, it was tremblingly re-uttered on departure. Never before had such a prayer been heard within an Egyptian palace. Yet the halls of princes no more than the hovels of peasants are unsuitable for intercessions and supplications. Everywhere and always should be the saint's motto in regard to prayer. 2. *The old man's history.* Gazing with tender interest on the venerable form of the patriarch as, leaning on the arm of his son, he softly steps across the threshold of the magnificent reception hall, the royal Pharaoh, probably struck with his aged and feeble appearance, kindly inquires, "How many are the days of the years of thy life?" to which Jacob with equal circumlocution, with perhaps a little of the garrulousness that is so natural and becoming in the old, but also with a true touch of pathos, replies, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the lives of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." His existence on the earth he characterises as having been—(1) A

perpetual pilgrimage, a constant wandering, a continual sojourning, which in his case it had really been—from Beersheba to Padan-aram, from Padan-aram to Canaan, from one location in the land of promise to another, and finally from Canaan to Egypt—but which is no less true of all men's lives; "here we have no continuing city." (2) A short pilgrimage. Adding them up one by one, the days of the years of his pilgrimage might seem to be many; but in the retrospect they appeared what they really were, few and soon numbered; as life, which to the young in prospect looks long, to the old in retrospect is ever short. How amazing is the difference which a change of standpoint produces in the view which the mind takes of man's existence on the earth, as of other things! and how important that we should bear this in mind when numbering our days! (3) A sad pilgrimage. Not only had the days of Jacob's years been few, but they had also been evil, filled with trouble, sorrow, and vexation, more even than that of any of his predecessors. It was one more testimony to the fact that not only is man born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward, but that it is only through much tribulation that a child of God can enter the kingdom.

Learn—1. That prudence becomes a counsellor. This was strikingly exemplified in Joseph's conduct in presenting his brethren before Pharaoh. 2. That honesty advances a suppliant. In the long run Joseph's brethren were better served by their perfect integrity and straightforwardness in Pharaoh's presence than they would have been by resorting to duplicity and equivocation. 3. That piety adorns the old. How beautiful does the character of Jacob, the aged wanderer, appear as it stands before us in Pharaoh's palace, in the westering sunlight of his earthly pilgrimage! "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—10.—*The presentation to Pharaoh.* I. TESTIMONY TO POWER OF CHARACTER. Joseph's influence. The five brethren selected perhaps with a view to their *appearance*, and in the number *five*, which was regarded as a significant number among the Egyptians. The monarch's reception of the strangers due to Joseph's influence. Generally diffused. There is much *graciousness* in the heathen monarch, although partly to be ascribed to national characteristics, for the Egyptians were a very different race from the Canaanites; still we may believe that the conduct of Pharaoh was mostly due to the effect of Joseph's ministry and personal exemplification of the religious life. One true man is a great power in a country.

II. A CONSPICUOUS EXAMPLE of Divine grace. The old patriarch is presented. He plainly impressed the monarch as *extremely aged*, perhaps indicating that the centenarian was a great rarity then among heathen nations. His long life was a long course of gracious dealings. The *effect of a religious life* in prolonging the years is exemplified. It is said that since Christianity obtained its legitimate, or more of its legitimate influence in Europe, the average length of human life has been doubled. Yet, as Jacob confesses, he is *not as old as his fathers*. His life had been a *pilgrimage in a wilderness*. His days *few and evil*, compared with what they might have been. Seventeen years longer they were lengthened out—a testimony to the effect of peace and prosperity in preserving life when it is under the blessing of God. Jacob blessed Pharaoh. The less is blessed of the greater. The two princes stood face to face—the *prince of God*—the *prince of Egypt*.

III. A PROPHETIC FACT: the world shall be blessed through the heirs of the Divine promise. Jacob had much to be thankful for; and although he thanked God first, he teaches us by his example not to forget the claims of fellow-creatures in our gratitude, even though they be separated from us in faith and religion.—R.

Ver. 9.—*The discipline of life.* Few and evil, yet 130 years; and how many blessings temporal and spiritual had been received during their course. We need not suppose him unthankful. But blessings do not of themselves make a man happy. Some worm may be at the root. And in Jacob's case early faults cast a shadow over his whole life. The remembrance of early deceit, his natural shrinking from danger, his family cares, his mourning for Rachel (ch. xlviii. 7) and for Joseph, gave a tinge

of melancholy not entirely to be taken away even by receiving his son as it were from the dead. The retrospect of his life seemed that of a suffering man.

I. ABIDING SORROW IS THE FRUIT OF EARLY FAULTS, THOUGH REPENTED OF (1 Cor. xv. 9). It does not necessarily imply separation from God, or doubt of personal salvation. If "a godly sorrow," it works repentance, *i. e.* a more complete turning to God. But just as early neglect of the laws affecting bodily health produces a lasting effect, however carefully these laws may be attended to in after years, so neglect of God's moral and spiritual laws produces sorrow, varying in kind, and in the channel by which it comes, but bearing witness to the truth of God's unceasing watchfulness.

II. THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE IS NOT IN ANGER, BUT FOR OUR PURIFICATION. Thus suffering may be a blessing. But for sorrow Jacob might have sunk into taking his ease. His besetting danger was worldly carefulness (ch. xxx. 41). So sorrow, from outward circumstances or from inward reflection, often brings us nearer God. It teaches the vanity of earth that we may realise the blessedness of the inheritance above; that frail and weary we may cling more closely to the promises of the rest which remaineth (Heb. iv. 9).

III. THIS LIFE IS INTENDED TO BE A PILGRIMAGE, NOT A REST. Its blessedness consists not in present enjoyment, but in preparation for the rest to come (Luke xii. 20, 21). We are reminded that there is a goal to be reached, a prize to be won (1 Cor. ix. 24; 1 Pet. i. 3—9), and that the time is short, that we may put forth all our efforts (Eccles. ix. 10) to overcome besetting faults and snares of worldliness. A pilgrim (Heb. xi. 14) is seeking a country not yet reached. The remembrance of this keeps the life Godward. True faith will work patience and activity; true hope will work cheerfulness under hindrances, and, if need be, under sufferings. And the love of Christ (John xiv. 2, 3), and the consciousness that we are his, will constrain us "to walk even as he walked." For what are you striving? to lade yourself with thick clay? To gain honour, renown, admiration, bodily enjoyment? or as a pilgrim (Num. x. 29) walking in Christ's way, and doing Christ's work?—M.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 11.—**And Joseph placed his father and his brethren** (*i. e.* gave them a settlement, the import of which the next clause explains), **and gave them a possession** (*i. e.* allowed them to acquire property) **in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses,**—either that district of Goshen in which Jacob and his family first settled (Michaelis, Rosenmüller), or, what seems more probable, the land of Goshen itself (LXX., Keil, Hengstenberg, Kalisch, *et alii*), being so named proleptically from the town Rameses, which was subsequently built (Exod. i. 11), or, if the town existed in the time of Joseph, and was only afterwards fortified by the Israelites, deriving its designation from the name of its chief city—**as Pharaoh had commanded.**

Ver. 12.—**And Joseph nourished**—*ἐσιτο-μέτρει* (LXX.), *i. e.* gave them their measure of corn—**his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to** their **families**—literally, *to, or according to, the mouth of the little ones*, meaning either in proportion to the size of their families (LXX., Keil, Kalisch, Murphy), or with all the tenderness with which a parent provides for his offspring (Murphy), or the whole body of them, from the greatest even to the least (Calvin), or completely, down even to the food for their children ('Speaker's Commentary').

Ver. 13.—**And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore** (literally, *heavy*), **so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted** (literally, *was exhausted*, had become languid and spiritless) **by reason of the famine.** The introduction of the present section, which first depicts the miseries of a starving population, and then circumstantially describes a great political revolution forced upon them by the stern necessity of hunger, may have been due to a desire (1) to exhibit the extreme urgency which existed for Joseph's care of his father and brethren (Bush), (2) to show the greatness of the benefit conferred on Joseph's house (Baumgarten, Keil, Lange), and perhaps also (3) to foreshadow the political constitution afterwards bestowed upon the Israelites (Gerlach).

Ver. 14.—**And Joseph gathered up**—the verb, used only here of collecting money, usually signifies to gather things lying on the ground, as, *e. g.*, ears of corn (Ruth ii. 3), stones (ch. xxxi. 46), manna (Exod. xvi. 14), flowers (Cant. vi. 2)—**all the money** (literally, *silver*) **that was found in the land of Egypt,**

and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph (who in this matter was simply Pharaoh's steward) **brought the money into Pharaoh's house** (*i. e.* deposited it in the royal treasury).

Ver. 15.—**And when money failed** (literally, *and the silver was consumed, or spent*) **in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all** (literally, *and all*) **the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth** (literally, *and why should we die in thy presence because silver faileth?* i. e. seeing that thou art able to support us).

Vers. 16, 17.—**And Joseph said, Give** (literally, *bring*) **your cattle; and I will give you** (*sc.* bread) **for your cattle, if money fail. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread** in exchange **for horses, and for the flocks** (literally, *and for cattle of the flocks*), **and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses** (the severity of these terms of sale and purchase was not so great as at first sight appears, since to a famishing people under-fed cattle and starving horses must have been comparatively worthless): **and he fed them**—literally, *led*, in the sense of cared for and maintained, *them* (cf. Ps. xxiii. 2; Isa. xl. 11)—**for all their cattle for that year**—this was the sixth year of the famine (*vide* ver. 23).

Vers. 18, 19.—**When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year** (not the second from the commencement of the dearth, but the second from the consumption of their money), **and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that**—literally, *for if* (sc. we should speak openly), hence equivalent to an intensified *but*—**our money** (literally, *the silver*) **is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle;**—literally, *our herds of cattle also* (sc. have come) *to my lord*—**there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may** (literally, *and we shall*) **live, and not die, that the land be not desolate** (literally, *and the land shall not be desolate*).

Ver. 20.—**And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so** (literally, *and*) **the land became Pharaoh's.** From this it may be concluded that originally Pharaoh had no legal claim to the soil, but that the people had a valid title to its absolute possession, each man being regarded as the legitimate proprietor of the portion on which he had expended the labour of cultivation.

Ver. 21.—**And as for the people, he removed them**—not enslaved them, converted them into serfs and bondmen to Pharaoh (LXX., Vulgate), but simply transferred them, caused them to pass over—**to cities**—not from cities to cities, as if changing their populations (Onkelos, Rosenmüller, Kalisch), but either from the country districts to the towns (Targums Jonathan and Jerusalem, Lange, Schumann, Gerlach, Murphy), or according to the cities, *i. e.* in which the grain had been previously collected (Keil)—**from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.** Not that the people were transported from one side of the country to the other as a high stroke of policy to complete their subjugation (Jarchi, Grotius, Rosenmüller, Kalisch, and others), but that throughout the land they were moved into the nearest cities, as a considerate and even merciful arrangement for the more efficiently supplying them with food (Calvin, Keil, Lange, Wordsworth, Speaker's Commentary).

Ver. 22.—**Only the land of the priests** (so the LXX., Vulgate, and Chaldee render *cohen*, which, however, sometimes signifies a prince) **bought he not; for the priests had a portion**—not of land (Lange, Kalisch), but of food (Keil, Murphy)—assigned them **of Pharaoh** (not of Joseph, who must not, therefore, be charged with the sin of extending a State allowance to an idolatrous priesthood), **and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands,**—that is, in consequence of the State aliment which they enjoyed (during the period of the famine) they did not require to alienate their lands.

Vers. 23, 24.—**Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.** This proves the time to have been the last year of the famine; and since the people obtained seed from the viceroy, it is reasonable to suppose that they would also have their cattle restored to them to enable them to till the ground. **And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.** This verse is a sufficient refutation of the oft-preferred charge that Joseph had despoiled the Egyptians of their liberties, and converted a free people into a horde of abject slaves. Slave-owners are not usually content with a tax of only twenty per cent. on the gross revenues of their estates. Nor does it seem reasonable to allege that this was an exorbitant demand on the part either of Joseph or of Pharaoh. If in the seven years of plenty the people could afford to part with a fifth part of their produce, might not an improved system of agriculture enable them, under the new regulations, to pay as

much as that in the shape of rent, and with quite as much ease? At all events the people themselves did not consider that they were being subjected to any harsh or unjust exaction.

Ver. 25.—**And they said, Thou hast saved our lives** (literally, *thou hast kept us alive*): **let us find grace in the sight of my lord** (*i. e.* let us have the land on these favourable terms), **and we will be Pharaoh's servants.** "That a sort of feudal service is here intended—the service of free labourers, not bondmen—we may learn from the relationship of the Israelites to God, which was formed after the plan of this Egyptian model" (Gerlach).

Ver. 26.—**And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day** (*i. e.* the day of the narrator), that **Pharaoh should have the fifth** part; **except the land of the priests only**, which **became not Pharaoh's.** The account here given of the land tenure in Egypt, viz., (1) that after the time of Joseph the kings of Egypt became lords paramount of the soil, (2) that the only free landholders in the country were the members of the priestly caste, and (3) that the population generally occupied their farms at the uniform fixed rent of one fifth of their yearly produce, is abundantly corroborated by the statements of Herodotus (ii. 109), that Sesostris divided the soil of Egypt among the inhabitants, "assigning square plots of equal size to all, and obtaining his chief revenue from the rent which the holders were required to pay him year by year;" of Diodorus Siculus (i. 73), that the land in Egypt belonged either to the priests, to the king, or to the military order; and of Strabo (xvii. 787), that the peasants were not landowners, but occupiers of rateable land; as also by the monuments, which represent the king, priests, and warriors alone as having landed property (Wilkinson, Keil). Dr. Robinson quotes a modern parallel to this act of Joseph's, which both illustrates its nature and by way of contrast exhibits its clemency. Up to the middle of the present century the people of Egypt had been the owners as well as tillers of the soil. "By a single decree the Pasha (Mohammed Ali) declared himself to be the sole owner of all lands in Egypt; and the people of course became at once only his tenants at will, or rather his slaves." "The modern Pharaoh made no exceptions, and stripped the mosques and other religious and charitable institutions of their landed endowments as mercilessly as the rest. Joseph gave the people seed to sow, and required for the king only a fifth of the produce, leaving four-fifths to them as their own; but now, though seed is in like manner given out, yet every village is compelled to cultivate two-thirds of its lands with corn and other articles for the Pasha, and also to render back to him, in the form of taxes and exactions in kind, a large proportion of the produce remaining after" ('Biblical Researches,' i. 42).

Ver. 27.—**And Israel** (*i. e.* the people) **dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein** (*i. e.* acquired holdings in it), **and grew** (or became fruitful), **and multiplied exceedingly** —or became very numerous. This was the commencement of the promise (ch. xlvi. 3).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 11—27.—*Joseph's policy in Egypt.* I. TOWARDS THE ISRAELITES. 1. *He gave them a settlement in Goshen.* Though in one sense the land of Goshen was Pharaoh's grant, it is apparent from the story that they owed it chiefly to the wise and prudent management of Joseph that they found themselves located in the fattest corner of the land. In thus providing for them Joseph had without doubt an eye to their enrichment, to their separation as a people from the Egyptian inhabitants of the land, and to their convenience when the day came for their return. Thus we see an evidence of Joseph's fervent piety. 2. *He supplied them with food while the famine lasted.* That he did so without charges to them the narrative explicitly asserts. Nor can Joseph's right so to provide for his own household be legitimately challenged, the more especially that it was owing purely to his wise administration that the king's granaries were filled with corn. That Joseph did so was a proof of his natural affection. 3. *He allowed them to acquire possessions.* That is to say, he secured them in their rights of property while they resided among strangers. He cast around them the protection of the law all the same as if they had been Egyptians. This was a testimony to Joseph's political equity.

II. TOWARDS THE EGYPTIANS. 1. *Joseph's policy described.* (1) Before the coming of the famine. Joseph gathered up a fifth part of the produce of the land and stored it up in granaries against the succeeding years of famine, paying doubtless for what he took, and affording the inhabitants of the country an example of economy and foresight. (2) During the continuance of the famine he resold the

grain which he had previously collected; in the first instance, for money; in the second instance, when the money failed, for horses and cattle; and in the third instance, when nothing remained between the people and starvation, for their lands and their persons. (3) At the close of the famine Joseph returned to the people their lands, along with seed, and of necessity also cattle for its cultivation, exacting from them in return as rent a fifth part of the produce, the same proportion that he had lifted from them during the seven prosperous years. 2. *Joseph's policy challenged.* It has been vigorously assailed, (1) for its severity; eloquent writers dilating with much indignation on its arbitrary, oppressive, tyrannical, and ferocious character, representing Joseph as little other than a semi-royal despot who little recked of the lives and liberties of his grovelling subjects so long as he could aggrandise himself and his royal patron; (2) for its injustice, being very different treatment from that which had been measured out to the Israelites, who were strangers and foreigners in the land, while they (the Egyptians) were the native population; and (3) for its impiety, Joseph having sinfully taken advantage of the necessities of the people to reduce them by one bold stroke to a condition of abject and helpless slavery. 3. *Joseph's policy defended.* (1) The alleged severity is greater in appearance than reality, since it is certain that Joseph did nothing harsh in selling corn for money so long as people had it, or horses and cattle when money failed, and it cannot be fairly proved that Joseph did not give them full value for their lands. (2) The imputation of partiality will disappear if it be remembered that Joseph's brethren were only expected to be temporary settlers in Egypt, and besides were few in number, so that a gratuitous distribution of corn amongst them was not at all an unwarrantable exercise of philanthropy, whereas to have pauperised a whole nation would have been to inflict upon them the greatest possible injury. (3) The charge of having enslaved a free people may be answered by stating first that the narrative when fairly construed implies nothing more than that Joseph changed the land tenure from that of freehold to a rent charge, and that for the convenience of supporting the people while the famine lasted he distributed them (*i. e.* the country folks) among the cities where the grain was stored; and secondly, that instead of complaining against Joseph as the destroyer of their liberties, the people applauded him as the saviour of their lives.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The settlement of the children of Israel in Goshen.* I. A CONSUMMATION. Distinctly the *act of Joseph*, under the command of Pharaoh. 1. The fruit of righteousness reaped. 2. The fulfilment of God's word.

II. A NEW LIFE BASED UPON THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE GRACE. The weak things have been *proved mighty*, the elect of God has been exalted. The "*best of the land*" is for the seed of the righteous: "The meek shall inherit the earth." Goshen the type of the Divine kingdom.

Vers. 13—26. The policy of Joseph is faithfully employed for his monarch. The advantage taken of the people's necessities to increase the power of the throne is quite Eastern in its character—not *commended* to general imitation, but *permitted* to be carried out through Joseph, because it gave him greater hold upon the government, and perhaps wrought beneficially on the whole in that early period of civilisation. The honour of the priesthood is a testimony to the sacredness which the Egyptians attached to religious persons and things. The earliest nations were the most religious, and there is no doubt that the universality of religion can be traced among the tribes of the earth. An atheistic nation never has existed, and never can exist, except as in France, at a revolutionary period, and for a short time.—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 28.—**And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was** (literally, *the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were*) **an hundred forty and seven years.** He had lived seventy-seven years in Canaan, twenty years in Padan-aram, thirty-three in Canaan again, and seventeen in Egypt, in all 147 years.

Ver. 29.—**And the time drew nigh that Israel** (*i. e.* Jacob) **must die** (literally, *and the days of Israel to die drew near*): **and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight** (not as if Jacob doubted Joseph's affection, but simply as desiring a last token of his love, perhaps also as unconsciously recognising his son's greatness), **put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh,**—an ancient form of adjuration (cf. ch. xxiv. 2)—**and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt.** On the root קָבַר, to bury (cf. Eng. cover), *vide* ch. xxiii. 4.

Ver. 30.—**But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place.** The request of the venerable patriarch, while due in some respect to the deeply-seated instinct of human nature which makes men, almost universally, long to be buried in ancestral graves, was inspired by the clear faith that Canaan was the true inheritance of Israel, and that, though now obtaining a temporary refuge in Egypt, his descendants would eventually return to the land of promise as their permanent abode. **And he** (*i. e.* Joseph) **said, I will do as thou hast said**—literally, *according to thy word*.

Ver. 31.—**And he** (i. e. Jacob) **said, Swear unto me** (in the manner indicated in ver. 29). **And he** (*i. e.* Joseph) **sware unto him. And** (having concluded this touching and impressive ceremonial) **Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.** Though supported by many eminent authorities (Chaldee Paraphrase, Symmachus, Vulgate, Calvin, Willet, Rosenmüller, Delitzsch, Keil, Kalisch, &c., &c.), the present rendering is not entirely free from difficulty, since not until the next chapter is there any mention of Jacob's sickness; while in favour of the reading, "And Israel bowed himself on the top of his staff" (LXX.), it may be urged (1) that it is adopted by the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. xi. 21), (2) that the Hebrew words for staff and bed differ only in the punctuation, and (3) that the action of leaning on his staff was quite as suitable to Jacob's circumstances as turning over and bowing on his bed's head.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 28—31.—*Jacob's residence in Egypt.* I. Jacob's peaceful old age. "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years." After an eventful and chequered pilgrimage of 130 years, during which Jacob had made large experience of the ills of life, having encountered adversity in forms both more numerous and severe than are allotted to most, he had at length reached a happy harbour of rest in the calm contemplative evening of old age, exchanging the anxieties and toils of his previously wandering condition for a home of ease and comfort in the fat land of Goshen, and bidding farewell to all his past tears and sorrows in the enjoyment of the tender care and rich love of Joseph, Rachel's son. Verily, with this old weather-beaten traveller it had become light at eventide. It is noticeable that Jacob lived as long a time in Egypt as Joseph had spent in Jacob's home in Canaan—seventeen years—thus receiving an ample recompense for the affection he had lavished on his son. Let parents be encouraged thereby to love and care for their children in the tender years of infancy and youth; and let children see in Joseph an example of the rich return which they should give their parents, cherishing amid the infirmities of age those who have watched over them, and loved them, and prayed for them with so much solicitude and affection.

II. Jacob's approaching dissolution. "The time drew nigh that Israel must die." It was a time that Israel had now for some considerable period been anticipating. When he stood before Pharaoh he informed that august but benevolent monarch that he reckoned his earthly pilgrimage as good as closed. At least his words imply that he had no expectation of living to the age of his revered ancestors. Consequently he was not surprised, though he perceived that death was rapidly gaining ground upon his feeble steps. Perfectly aware that it was appointed unto all men once to die, he had been piously, while reposing beneath the shadow of Joseph's wing, reckoning up the number of his own days in particular, and had found that the allotted span was nearly passed. Nor does it appear that he was alarmed by the knowledge of that melancholy fact. The man who had fought with God and prevailed was not likely to be dismayed by the prospect of engaging with the king of terrors. He who had been so long in the enjoyment of Jehovah's friendship and salvation would scarcely regard it as a hardship to be translated to Jehovah's presence. Let the saints learn to number their days that so they may apply their hearts

to heavenly wisdom; to live in habitual contemplation of the end, that they may not be afraid when death comes, and to cultivate that holy alliance with the God of salvation which will enable them to say, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

III. Jacob's dying request. "Bury me not in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying-place." This request was addressed to his son Joseph, whom he had hastily summoned to his side. It is not quite certain that at this moment Jacob was confined to bed, or that he was actually so near his decease as he imagined. The probability is that he survived for some little while longer, but that with the knowledge that his departure from the earth could not be long delayed, he desired to leave his last instructions for his funeral with his honoured and beloved son. Accordingly, in a conversation, he explained that he was anxious that Joseph should convey his remains to the family vault at Hebron, and lay them beside the dust of Abraham and Isaac. It was a natural desire that the old man should seek to sleep among his kindred; but the wish had a higher origin than simply the instincts of nature. Canaan was the God-given inheritance of himself and his descendants; and though as yet a long interval must elapse before his children could enter on its possession, he would manifest his faith in the Divine promise by laying his bones in the sacred soil. It becomes God's people to imitate the patriarch in still holding on to God's sure word of promise, although the fulfilment should be long delayed, and in particular to remember that as with Jacob so with them, God's best promises will be realised not on earth, but in the better country, even an heavenly.

IV. Jacob's deep anxiety. "And he said, Swear unto me." It might have been supposed that Joseph's word of promise, "I will do as thou hast said," would be sufficient to allay the aged patriarch's apprehensions, but it was not. Remembering the old form of oath which Abraham had employed in connection with Eliezer, he imposed it on his son, as if to bind him by the holiest obligations to fulfil his last request. Joseph, we may be sure, would have honoured his aged parent's wish without the additional ceremony of swearing; but inasmuch as it was not necessarily sinful, and it would tend to dispel his father's fears, he consented to the proposal, "and he sware unto him." Jacob perhaps might have dispensed with the oath, and certainly Christians should be satisfied with a simple "yea" or "nay," remembering that whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil; but sons may learn from Joseph to bear with an aged parent's infirmities and to humour his inclinations, when these are not sinful.

V. Jacob's solemn worship. "And Jacob bowed himself upon the bed's head," or "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." But whatever was the exact position of the patriarch, his exercise was devotion. With reverent inclination of his aged head he poured out his soul in grateful adoration to his God, who had enabled him so successfully to arrange everything connected with his funeral that he had now nothing left to do but die. And in this too the patriarch might advantageously be followed by his spiritual children. Happy they who before being summoned to put off this tabernacle are able to say, "Father, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do!" It is a special mercy for which they may well give God thanks.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 27—31.—*The sunset of a long life.* There is a touching beauty in this scene between the veteran Israel and the prosperous Joseph.

I. An illustration of human infirmity. The *supplanter*, the *prince of God*, must succumb at last to the King of Terrors. "*Israel must die.*" Yet he is not afraid of death.

II. Strength is made perfect in weakness. Grace appears brightest at the end. His gray hairs have *not* been "brought with sorrow to the grave," although he feared they would. The lost son is the comforter of his last days; to him he commits his dust to be laid with his fathers.

III. Perseverance is not the fruit of man's perfection, but of God's mercy.

Jacob is faithful to the covenant spirit to the end, although in many respects his character was a mingled one. Yet he clung to the Divine word. Seventeen years could not wear out his love for the promised land. He knew the solemnity of an oath, for had he not himself sworn and changed not? He would leave behind him in his last wishes a *testimony* which would help to keep his children faithful. "*And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.*" The LXX., and the Syriac, and the Itala versions, with the reference in Heb. xi. 21, by a slight change in the Hebrew vowels, have rendered the words "*he worshipped upon the top of his staff*"—*i. e.* leaning on that which had borne him through his pilgrimage, and thus, as it were, declaring the long journey at an end. But whether he turned towards the bed's head, as it were away from the world towards God, or leaned on his staff, the idea is the same—he *bowed himself*, like Simeon, saying, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." It was a lovely sunset after a day of many clouds and much weariness and fear.—R.

Vers. 28—31.—*Jacob's apprehension.* I. WHAT IT WAS. 1. It was *not anxiety about temporal support*, for that had been generously made sure to him by his son Joseph. 2. It was *not concern about the future fortunes of his family*, for these had been graciously taken under God's protection. 3. It was *not uncertainty as to his own personal acceptance with Jehovah*, for of that he had long ago been assured. 4. It was scarcely even *fear of his approaching death*, for besides being a thought with which Jacob had long been familiar, to a weary pilgrim like him the event itself would not be altogether unwelcome. 5. It was *dread lest his lifeless body should be interred in Egypt*, far from the graves of his ancestors in the holy land.

II. WHENCE IT AROSE. 1. *From the deeply-seated instinct in human nature*, which makes men wish, if possible, to sleep beside their fathers and friends. Though religion teaches us to believe that every spot on earth is in a manner holy ground, yet it does not induce a spirit of indifference as to the last resting-place where we shall lie. 2. From *a firm faith in the Divine promise* that his descendants should yet return to Canaan. Even if Jacob did not anticipate that this would immediately occur, if, as is probable, he had already dark forebodings that the period of exile and servitude spoken of by Jehovah to Abraham was about to commence, he was yet able to detect a silver lining in the cloud, to see the happy time beyond, when his children, in accordance with the promise "I will surely bring thee up again," should return home to their presently abandoned inheritance.

III. HOW IT WAS REMOVED. 1. By Joseph's *promise*. Requested by his aged parent to convey his body back to Canaan, when the life had departed, Joseph solemnly engages to carry out that parent's wishes to the letter. "I will do as thou hast said." 2. By Joseph's *oath*. As if to remove every possible ground of apprehension, the old man further binds his son by an appeal to heaven. "And he said, Swear unto me; and he (Joseph) sware unto him." The venerable patriarch's anxieties were at an end. "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."—W.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Ver. 1.—**And it came to pass after these things** (*i. e.* the events recorded in the preceding chapter, and in particular after the arrangements which had been made for Jacob's funeral), **that** one **told Joseph,**—the verb וַיֹּאמֶר is here used impersonally, or passively, for "one told," or "it was told," to Joseph (LXX., ἀπηγγέλη; Vulgate, *nunciatum est;* Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, *et alii*); or probably emphatically, by way of calling attention to the circumstance—denoting perhaps a special messenger (Tayler Lewis)—**Behold, thy father is sick.** The word in the original conveys the idea of being worn down or becoming infirm through age or disease, and may suggest the notion that Jacob was now regarded as rapidly approaching dissolution. **And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim**—who at this time must have been about eighteen or twenty years of age (Keil), and who appear to have accompanied their father from respectful affection to their aged relative (Murphy), or to have been taken in the hope that "the words of their blessed grand-

father would make an indelible impression on their hearts" (Lawson), rather than in order to obtain from Jacob "a pledge of their unqualified admission as members of his house," of their exclusion from which Joseph was not altogether groundlessly apprehensive, in consequence of their being the children of an Egyptian mother (Kalisch).

Ver. 2.—**And** one **told Jacob** (וַיַּגֵּד, also used impersonally, like וַיֹּאמֶר in ver. 1), **and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel**—the significance of this change of name it is impossible to overlook (cf. ch. xlv. 27, 28)—**strengthened himself** (for the work which, as head of the theocratic family, he now felt himself inwardly moved to perform), **and sat upon the bed**—*i. e.* he **raised** himself up to a sitting posture.

Vers. 3, 4.—**And Jacob said unto Joseph,**—recalling the experiences of early days—**God Almighty**—El Shaddai (*vide* ch. xvii. 1)—**appeared unto me at Luz**—*i. e.* Bethel (*vide* ch. xxviii. 17, 19; xxxv. 6, 15)—**in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee** for **an everlasting possession.** It is obvious that Jacob principally has in his mind the theophany at Bethel on his return from Padan-aram.

Vers. 5, 6.—**And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt** (*vide* ch. xli. 50—52) **before I came unto thee into Egypt,**—this would almost seem to imply that Jacob knew of Joseph's having had sons born to him since his (Jacob's) arrival at Goshen—**are mine** (*i. e.* I shall reckon them as my own sons, giving them an equal place with the other members of my family); **as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine**—literally, *Ephraim and Manasseh, as Reuben and Simeon, shall be mine.* The double portion thus conferred upon Joseph in the persons of his sons was a practical investiture of him with the birthright of which Reuben had been deprived (1 Chron. v. 1), in respect at least of the inheritance; in respect of the honour of being the next connecting link in the chain of redemption, leading on and down to the coming of the Saviour, the birthright appears to have been transferred to Judah (ch. xlix. 8—10). **And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine** (*i. e.* shall be reckoned in thine own family), and **shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.** They should not form heads of separate tribes, but be ranked under the banners of Ephraim and Manasseh. It is uncertain whether Joseph had more sons than two (*vide supra*); if he had, they were included in the families of their brethren, as here directed (cf. Numb. xxvi. 28—37; 1 Chron. vii. 14—29).

Ver. 7.—**And as for me** (literally, *and I*, the pronoun being emphatic), **when I came from Padan,**—literally, *in my coming*, i. e. while on my journey, *from Padan*, or Padan-aram. This is the only place where the shorter designation is employed (cf. ch. xxv. 20)—**Rachel**—the mention to Joseph of his beloved mother could not fail to kindle emotion in his breast, as obviously it had revived a pang of sorrow in that of the old man—"the remembrance of the never-to-be-forgotten one causing a sudden spasm of feeling" (Delitzsch)—**died by me**—not for me in the sense of sharing with me my toils and perils, and so bringing on herself the deadly travail which cut her off (Lange), which is too subtle and metaphysical in its refinement; but either upon me, *i. e.* as an heavy affliction falling on me (Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Murphy, *et alii*); or at my side, *i. e.* near me (Keil, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'); or perhaps to me, meaning, This happened to me, or, I saw Rachel die (Kalisch); or possibly with a touch of tender emotion, Rachel to me, *i. e.* my Rachel died (Tayler Lewis)—**in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet** there was **but a little way**—literally, *a length of ground;* the LXX. add ἱππόδρομος, meaning probably such a distance as a horse can go without being over-worked (*vide* ch. xxxv. 16)—**to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.**

Ver. 8.—**And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?** The failing sight of the patriarch (ver. 10) probably was the reason why he did not sooner recognise his grandchildren, and the fact that he did not at first discern their presence shows that his adoption of them into the number of the theocratic family was prompted not by the accidental impulse of a natural affection excited through beholding the youths, but by the inward promptings of the Spirit of God.

Ver. 9.—**And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons** (of whom you have just spoken), **whom God hath given me in this** place. It speaks highly in Joseph's favour that, after listening to Jacob's promise regarding Ephraim and Manasseh, he did not seek to draw his aged father's attention to the young men before him, but quietly waited for Jacob to take the initiative in any further communications of a personal nature that he might wish to address to them. **And he** (*i. e.* Jacob) **said Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.**

Ver. 10.—**Now** (literally, *and*) **the eyes of Israel were dim** (literally, *heavy*) **for age,** so that he **could not see.** This explains why he did not earlier recognise his grandchildren,

and why he asked them to be set close by his bed. **And he** (their father) **brought them near unto him; and he** (their old grandfather) **kissed them, and embraced them** (cf. Isaac's blessing of Jacob, ch. xxvii. 26, 27).

Ver. 11.—**And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God** (Elohim) **hath shewed me also thy seed.** The first half of Israel's utterance is rendered by the LXX. "Ἰδοὺ τοῦ προσώπου σου οὐκ ἐστερήθην."

Ver. 12.—**And Joseph brought them out from between his knees** (literally, *from near his knees*, i. e. the knees of his father, who while in the act of embracing had drawn them into that position), **and he** (viz. Joseph) **bowed himself with his face to the earth.** The reading "and they bowed themselves," *i. e.* Ephraim and Manasseh (Samaritan, Michaelis), and the rendering καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ (LXX.), are incorrect.

Ver. 13.—**And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.** Joseph naturally expected that Jacob's right hand would fall upon the head of Manasseh, as the firstborn, although with regard to even this a doubt might have been suggested if he had remembered how Isaac had been preferred to Ishmael, and Jacob to Esau.

Ver. 14.—**And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head,**—the first instance of the imposition of hands being used as a symbol of blessing. Though not necessarily connected with the form of benediction, it is not without a natural fitness to suggest the transmission of spiritual benefit. Accordingly it afterwards became the recognised mode of conveying to another some supernatural power or gift, and was employed in the Old Testament Church in the dedication of priests (Numb. xxvii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9), and in the New in the ordination of Christian office-bearers (Acts vi. 6; viii. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6), as well as by the Saviour and his apostles in the performance of many of their miracles (Matt. xix. 13; Mark viii. 23, 25; Acts ix. 17; xix. 6; xxviii. 8)—**who was the younger** (literally, *and he the little one*, i. e. the younger), **and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly;**—literally, *he placed his hands prudently*, i. e. of set purpose, the piel of שָׂכַל, to look at, conveying the intensive signification of acting with prudence and deliberation (Gesenius, Fürst); *intelligere fecit manus suas hoc est, docte, scite, et perite imposuit eis manus* (Vatablus, *vide* Glass. 'Phil. Tract.,' p. 761); a rendering of the words which has been adopted by the best scholars (Calvin, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Tayler Lewis, and others), though the translation, "he crossed his hands," which regards שִׂכֵּל as the piel of an unused root signifying to intertwine, ἐναλλὰξ τὰς χεῖρας (LXX.), *commutans manus* (Vulgate), is not entirely destitute of learned supporters (Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, Pererius, Knobel, Delitzsch, Gerlach, and others)—**for Manasseh was the firstborn.**

Vers. 15, 16.—**And he blessed Joseph** (*i. e.* in his sons), **and said, God,**—literally, *the Elohim.* The use of Elohim in a passage (vers. 15—19) which is undoubtedly Jehovistic in its import, and is by advanced critics (Davidson, Colenso) assigned to that writer, has been explained (Hengstenberg) as an indication that "the great spiritual Sun, Jehovah, was at that time," viz., at the entrance of the captivity, "concealed behind a cloud from the chosen race;" but, without resorting to any such doubtful hypothesis, it is sufficient to observe that Jacob practically identifies the Elohim spoken of with Jehovah, while by using the former expression he conveys the thought that the blessing about to be pronounced proceeded forth, not from Deity in general, but from the particular Elohim who had graciously manifested himself in the manner after described—**before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk,**—(cf. ch. xvii. 1; xxiv. 40) the God here referred to was one who had "a face," or manifested presence; in other words, was Jehovah—**the God which fed me**—literally, *the Elohim shepherding me* (cf. Ps. xxiii. 1; xxviii. 9)—**all my life long**—literally, *from as yet* (sc. I was), *i. e.* from the beginning of my existence, ἐκ νεότητος (LXX.)—**unto this day, the Angel**—the Maleach here spoken of cannot possibly be a creature, since he is explicitly identified with Elohim, but must have been the Jehovah Angel with whom Jacob wrestled at the ford of Jabbok (ch. xxxii. 23—29). The reading of the Samaritan codex, הַמֶּלֶךְ, the king, is open to suspicion—**which redeemed me from all evil,**—literally, *the* (sc. angel) *redeeming me;* the first use of the term *goël*, from גָּאַל, to buy back or redeem (Gesenius), to separate or untie (Fürst), or to stain as with blood, hence to be stained or polluted, as one who suffers a kinsman's blood to go unavenged, hence to remove the stain of blood by taking vengeance on the murderer (Tayler Lewis). Applied under the law to the next of kin (Levit. xxv. 25; xxvii. 13, 15, 19, &c., &c.), it is also used of God redeeming men, and especially Israel, from captivity (Exod. vi. 6; Isa. xliii. 1). In this sense it was employed by Jacob (cf. ch. xlviii.

16 with xlix. 18) and by Job (xix. 21) to describe the Divine Rescuer who had delivered them from ill both temporal and spiritual, and who was to complete his emancipating work by ultimately ransoming them from the power of the grave. The *God* to whom both Jacob and Job looked forward, and of whom both Moses and the prophets testified, was Christ (Gal. iii. 11; Titus ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18)—**bless the lads.** The singular verb suggests to Luther the reflection that the writer "*conjungit in uno opere benedicendi tres personas, Deum Patrem, Deum Pastorem, et Angelum,*" from which he draws the obvious conclusion, "*sunt igitur hi tres unus Deus et unus benedictor.*" **And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;**—literally, *and my name and the name of my fathers shall be named in them,* i. e. they shall be counted my sons and the children of my ancestors, though born of thee (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Lawson, Murphy, Wordsworth, and others); or, May this name be preserved by them, and the race of Abraham propagated by them! may the fathers and I live in them! (Gerlach, Kalisch); or, what seems more appropriate than either, May the grace and salvation enjoyed by my fathers and myself be renewed in them! (Keil, Lange) —**and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.** The original conveys the sense of swarming like the fishes of the sea, the ἁπαξ λεγόμενον, דָּגָה (from which comes the term דָּג, a fish, from being so wonderfully prolific), signifying to cover over with a multitude (*vide* Gesenius, 'Lexicon,' *sub voce*).

Ver. 17.—**And when** (literally, *and*) **Joseph saw that his father laid** (or was laying) **his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him**:—literally, *and it was evil in his eyes* (cf. ch. xxviii. 8)—**and** (supposing his father had made a mistake) **he held up** (or took hold of) **his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.**

Ver. 18.—**And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.** "From Joseph's behaviour we cannot certainly infer that, like Isaac, he loved the firstborn better than the youngest; but he was sorry that an honour was not given to the eldest which he would naturally expect, and bestowed on the youngest, who did not expect it, and who would not have been hurt by the want of it" (Lawson).

Ver. 19.—**And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly** (literally, *and over against that;* אוּלָם, the strongly adversative particle, signifying that which stands in front of, or opposite to, another thing) **his younger brother shall be greater than he** (cf. Numb. i. 33 with i. 35; ii. 19 with ii. 21), **and his seed shall become a multitude of nations**—literally, *shall be a fulness of nations.* In the time of Moses this prediction began to realise itself. In the first census which took place in the wilderness the tribe of Ephraim had 40,500 men, while that of Manasseh could only reckon 32,200; in the second the numbers received a temporary alteration, Ephraim counting only 32,500, and Manasseh 52,700; but after the conquest the ascendancy of Ephraim was restored, so that she easily assumed the lead among the ten northern tribes, and acquired a name and an influence only second to that of Judah (cf. Judges iv. 5; v. 14; viii.; xii.).

Ver. 20.—**And he** (*i. e.* Jacob) **blessed them that day, saying, In thee** (*i. e.* in Joseph, who is still identified with his sons) **shall Israel** (the nation) **bless, saying, God** (Elohim, the supreme source of all blessing) **make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh**—"in the position of his hands, and the terms of the blessing" (Keil).

Ver. 21.—**And Israel** (Jacob) **said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God** (Elohim) **shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.** "For Joseph and his children a great promise and dispensation" (Lange).

Ver. 22.—**Moreover** (literally, *and*) **I have given**—or, I give (Keil), I will give (Kalisch), the preterite being used prophetically as a future, or even as a present, the event being regarded, from its certainty, as already accomplished. It is thus not absolutely clear that Jacob here alludes to any past transaction in his own personal history—**to thee one portion**—literally, *one shoulder,* or ridge, or elevated tract of land, שְׁכֶם; *unam partem* (Vulgate), with which agree several of the ancient versions (Onkelos, Syriac)—**above thy brethren, which I took**—or take (Keil), or shall take (Kalisch)—**out of the hand of the Amorite**—a general name for the inhabitants of Canaan (*vide* ch. xv. 16)—**with my sword and with my bow.** As Scripture has preserved no account of any military exploit in the history of Jacob such as is here described, the patriarch's language has been understood as referring to the plot of ground at Shechem which Jacob purchased of Hamor the father of Shechem (ch. xxxiii. 19), and as signifying either that he had captured it by sword and bow, in the sense that his sons at the head of his armed retainers had put the inhabitants of the town to the sword, and so taken possession of the entire district (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Murphy); or that, though he had peacefully paid for it, he yet required at a subsequent period to recover

it by force of arms from the Canaanites (Lawson, Bush, Wordsworth); or that after the terrible tragedy at Shechem, when God put a fear upon the surrounding cities, Jacob and his sons stood in the gate of Shechem in the armed expectation of a hostile attack, and so may be said to have taken it by sword and bow (Rabbi Solomon, Lyra, Willet). It seems, however, better to regard the words as a prophetic utterance pointing forward to the conquest of Canaan, which Jacob here represents himself, in the persons of his descendants, as taking from the Amorites by means of sword and bow, and as intimating that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh would receive a double portion of the inheritance, the word שְׁכֶם being probably designed to convey a hint that the tract to be in future assigned to Joseph's descendants would be the region round about the ancient city Shechem (Ainsworth, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, &c.).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—22.—*Jacob's dying utterances.* I. AN OLD MAN'S SICK-BED. "It came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick." In this the venerable patriarch—1. *Suffered an experience that is common to all.* For nearly three half-centuries had this weather-beaten pilgrim been able to maintain himself erect amid the numberless vicissitudes of life. Strong, healthy, vigorous, and active too, he appears to have been until now, notwithstanding the peculiarly trying and chequered career through which he had passed. But all the while, the rolling years, as they glided softly by, had been touching him with their invisible fingers, and leaving on him their ineffaceable impressions, imperceptibly but surely relaxing his corded muscles, whitening and diminishing his manly locks, loosening his joints, making his step less lithe and firm, and generally draining away his strength. And now, at length, he had arrived where all men must, sooner or later, come, if they have a death-bed at all, no matter how bright may be their eye, or how ruddy their countenance, or how stalwart their frame, or how herculean their strength, to that period of infirmity and sickness that precedes dissolution. 2. *Enjoyed a privilege accorded to few.* Immediately that he had fallen sick, a messenger, despatched from Goshen, carried tidings to the vice-regal palace in the great metropolis, and Joseph, his beloved son, accompanied by his two boys, Ephraim and Manasseh, at once descended to express his sympathy and lend his aid. Not to many is it granted, in this world of separations and bereavements, to have all their family around them when they breathe their last, or to have their Josephs even, to put their hands upon the sinking eyelids, and gently close them in the sleep of death. Venerable pilgrim! Much afflicted in thy riper years, thou wast greatly comforted in thy latter days.

II. AN OLD PILGRIM'S REMINISCENCES. Learning of Joseph's arrival, the aged father musters his rapidly failing strength, and, recognising within his withered bosom the stirrings of the old prophetic spirit, prepares himself, by sitting upright in his bed, for delivering whatever communication should be put into his trembling lips. Casting his thoughts back upon the past with that fond delight with which the aged recall the story of their younger years, he relates to Joseph—1. *How El Shaddai had appeared to him* at Luz, or Bethel, in the land of Canaan, as he returned from Mesopotamia. 2. *What God had promised him* on that memorable occasion, that he should grow into a multitude of people, who should eventually possess the land, adding by way of parenthesis, at this stage, that in view of that inheritance to come he intended to adopt the sons of Joseph as his own; and 3. *The great affliction that had happened to him* almost immediately after in the loss of Rachel, Joseph's mother, to whose premature death and affecting burial "in the way of Ephrath" the old man, even at that long distance of time, cannot refer without emotion. "As for me, Rachel died upon me in the land of Canaan in the way."

III. AN OLD SAINT'S BLESSING. It is probable that, though Jacob had already referred to Joseph's sons, he had not yet been conscious of their presence, for "the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see." At length, however, discerning unfamiliar forms in the chamber, and ascertaining they were Ephraim and Manasseh, he proceeds to give them his patriarchal benediction. 1. *The actions of the patriarch.* (1) Requesting his grandchildren to be brought to his bedside, he tenderly embraces them, and kisses them with all an old man's affection, at the same

time giving special thanks to Elohim for his superabundant mercy in permitting him to see Joseph's sons, and his beloved Rachel's offspring. (2) Guiding his hands wittingly, he sets them crosswise upon his grandsons' heads, the right hand upon that of Ephraim, the younger, and the left hand upon that of Manasseh, the elder. Supposing that the patriarch had erred, Joseph endeavours, by changing his father's hands, to rectify the mistake, saying, "Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head." But the old man replies, thinking perhaps at the moment of himself and Esau, when they came before Isaac for his blessing, "I know it, my son, I know it," but refuses to comply with his son's suggestion. 2. *The contents of the blessing.* (1) The blessing upon Ephraim. This was the heirship of the theocratic blessing, the right of primogeniture, the place and power of the firstborn. "Truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." (2) The blessing upon Manasseh. "He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great." (3) The blessing upon both. "The angel who redeemed me from all evil bless the lads"—a promise of spiritual blessing for themselves; and "In thee shall Israel bless, saying"—a promise of spiritual influence with others. (4) The blessing upon Joseph. Joseph was blessed in the blessing of his sons, by their adoption into Jacob's family,—"My name shall be named upon them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac;" and by their reception of a double portion of the inheritance,—"Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

IV. An old prophet's prediction. "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers." 1. *The time when it was uttered.* When Jacob was on the eve of death. It is not at all improbable that the soul's vision of unseen (celestial and future) things becomes clearer as the obscuring veil of this mortal flesh wears thin; but the power of apprehending things to come, which Jacob in this instance displayed, was not due to such intensified spiritual penetration. Neither is it necessary to suppose that he received at this moment any special supernatural communication. Simply, he directed his dying gaze to the sure word of promise. 2. *The substance of what it said.* It announced nothing more than God already promised, viz., that he would continue with Jacob's descendants in Egypt, and eventually bring them up again to Canaan. 3. *The guarantee to which it pointed.* This was implicitly contained in the expression, "the land of your fathers." Canaan had been given in covenant to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and hence of necessity it would ultimately be restored to their seed according to the terms of the covenant.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xlviii.—We are admitted into the inner chamber of the patriarch's departing life, and we see there *the presence of Jehovah* with him. He is—1. *The subject of inspiration.* 2. The *mediator of the Divine promises.* He is under the control of purposes which have been swaying him all his life. 3. *A witness to Divine faithfulness.* The grandfather blessing the grandchildren. The blessing passes on to the third and fourth generation. Yet the human blessing is only the type of the Divine. "*The angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads.*" Jacob made a cross with his hands over the heads of the boys. It displeased Joseph, but it pleased God. The imposition of hands is also here. The *name of Jacob* is named upon them, the *symbol of the covenant.* Their prosperity is predicted, but it is connected immediately with their covenant standing. The elevated state of mind in the patriarch is a testimony to the sustaining power of religion in fleshly weakness. It points on too to the survival of the soul after the death of the body. The preference of Ephraim reminds us that all is ascribed to the grace of God.—R.

Vers. 15, 16.—*The threefold blessing.* Though the doctrine of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament with the same clearness as in the New Testament, the light of the gospel reveals many indications of it. In Numb. vi. 24, 27, the "name" of God is put upon the children of Israel in a triple formula. A name suggests what

we know of the person named. The "name" of God is what he has revealed concerning himself (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 5—7; Ps. xx. 1). The threefold benediction of Numb. vi. 24 (cf. Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 8) answers to the apostolic benediction of 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And Jacob's solemn blessing of his grandsons in a threefold name of God, answers to the formula of Christian baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19) into (εἰς) the name of the Trinity; while the word "bless," being in the singular, points to the unity of the Godhead. Whether the distinction of the Persons was known to Jacob matters little to us, if we believe that "these things were written for our learning." His prophetic blessing speaks to us of Fatherhood, Sanctification, Redemption, the blessings which we refer to the three Persons. The order of the two last is different from that which we usually observe; but cf. 1 Cor. i. 30. "God before whom my fathers did walk." The well-spring of all grace and source of all blessing. Of his own inherent love, caring for us (1 Pet. v. 7). His purpose, that we should rejoice in hope (Rom. xii. 12); having communion with him here (Phil. iv. 6, 7), the foretaste of eternal joy. Creation the proof of this good will (Ps. xix. 1). The infinity of his power, and minuteness of his care. The application of this to us (Matt. x. 29—31). The Bible and nature agree in declaring God's fatherhood. On this rests the call to walk before him (Gen. xvii. 1; Mal. i. 6), which can be obeyed only through belief of his fatherhood and love (Rom. viii. 3). Therefore he gives the spirit of adoption (Rom. viii. 15), the personal application of the general truth of his love, whereby we realise our position as children by grace (Titus iii. 5). "The God which fed me." The Holy Ghost imparts to men the bread of life. 1. *Historically*. By his agency the eternal Son became incarnate to give his flesh as the living bread. 2. *Practically*. By his power we are fed. Christ's work is applied to our conscience (John xvi. 14); we receive the food of our souls. This is the way of sanctification. It cannot be enforced by rules or penalties. However these may constrain outward observance, they cannot bring about the surrender of the will, the desire "Thy will be done," which is the principle of holiness. "The angel which redeemed me from all evil." Reminded of Ps. xci. 11, and probably some such idea was in Jacob's mind. But there is a foresight of Christ, the Angel of the covenant (Mal. iii. 1), in whom God's name is (Exod. xxiii. 20); of a redemption going far beyond earthly danger; "all evil." From sin and all its fruits of sorrow Christ redeemed us (Rom. vi. 14; Gal. iii. 13). Jacob, from his own experience, knew that "God is faithful." To us, a wider view of deliverance is given. And the pledge of God's faithfulness is Rom. viii. 32; and the assurance that it gives us 1 John vi. 2.—M.

EXPOSITION

CHAPTER XLIX.

Ver. 1.—**And Jacob** (having closed his interview with Joseph and his two sons) **called** (by means of messengers) **unto his sons** (*i. e.* the others who were then absent), **and said, Gather yourselves together,**—the prophet's last utterance must be a public one —**that I may tell you**—literally, *and I will tell you*—that **which shall befall you**—קָרָא, in the sense of happening or occurring to any one, is here equivalent to קָרָה (cf. ch. xlii. 4, 38)—**in the last days**—literally, *in the end of the days*, not simply in future time (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Kalisch), or in the times intervening between the speaker and the end of the human race (Murphy), but in the last age, the closing period of time, the era of fulfilment (Kurtz, Hengstenberg), which era, however, must be judged from the standpoint of the speaker (Baumgarten). Hence the period must not be restricted to exclusively Messianic times (Rabbi Nachmanides), ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν (LXX.), *in diebus novissimis* (Vulgate), but must commence with what to Jacob was the era of consummation, the days of the conquest (Baumgarten, Hengstenberg); while, on the other hand, it can as little be limited to these, but must be held as extending over *totum tempus ab exitu Ægypti ad Christi regnum* (Calvin), and even as reaching, though unconsciously to Jacob, to the very terminus of human history (Keil, Lange).

Ver. 2.—**Gather yourselves together,**—the repetition indicates at once the elevation of the speaker's soul, and the importance, in his mind, of the impending revelation—**and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.** The two clauses form a synthetic or synonymous parallel, numerous illustrations of which are to be found in the succeeding verses.

Vers. 3, 4.—**Reuben, thou art my first-**

born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:—Jacob's patriarchal benediction takes the form of an elevated poem, or sublime religious hymn, exhibiting the well-known classes of parallelism, the synthetic, the antithetic, and the synonymous, not alone in its separate clauses, but sometimes also in its stanzas or verses. As was perhaps to be expected, it begins with Reuben, who is characterised by a threefold designation, viz., (1) by his position in the family, as Jacob's firstborn; (2) by his relation to Jacob, as the patriarch's "might," כֹּחַ, or *robur virile*, and "the beginning" of his "strength," not "of his sorrow" (Vulgate, Aquila, Symmachus), though אוֹן might be so translated (cf. ch. xxxv. 18), and the sense would sufficiently accord with the allusion of ver. 4, but, as required by the parallelism, "of his vigour," אוֹן being here equivalent to כֹּחַ (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Keil, 'Speaker's Commentary,' *et alii*); and (3) by the natural prominence which as Jacob's eldest son belonged to him, "the excellency of dignity" or "elevation," *i. e.* the dignity of the chieftainship, and "the excellency of power," or authority, which the first-born claimed and received as his prerogative. Yet the natural advantages enjoyed by Reuben as Jacob's firstborn were to be taken from him, as the patriarch proceeded to announce—**Unstable as water,**—literally, *boiling over like water*, the import of which is not *effusus es sicut aqua* (Vulgate), but either ἐξύβρισας ὡς ὕδωρ (LXX.), or lasciviousness (*sc.* was to thee) as the boiling of water (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, &c.), the same root in Arabic conveying the notion of pride, and in Syriac that of wantonness—**thou shalt not excel;**—literally, *thou shalt not have the* יֶתֶר *or excellency* (ver. 3), *i. e.* the pre-eminence belonging to the firstborn, a sense which the versions have more or less successfully expressed: μὴ περισσεύσῃς (Aquila), οὐκ ἔσῃ περισσότερος (Symmachus), μὴ ἐκζέσῃς (LXX.), *non crescas* (Vulgate)—**because thou wentest up to thy father's bed** (*vide* ch. xxxv. 22; 1 Chron. v. 1); **then defiledst thou it**:—the verb is used absolutely, as meaning that Reuben had desecrated what ought to have been regarded by him as sacred (cf. Deut. xxvii. 20)—**he went up to my couch**—literally, *my couch he ascended;* the order of the words and the change from the second to the third person helping to give expression to the horror and indignation with which, even at that distance of time, the venerable patriarch contemplated the shameful deed.

Vers. 5—7.—**Simeon and Levi are brethren** (not in parentage alone, but also in their deeds; *e. g.* their massacre of the Shechemites (ch. xxxiv. 25), to which undoubtedly the next words allude); **instruments of cruelty are in their habitations**—literally, *instruments of violence their* מְכֵרֹת, a ἅπαξ λεγόμ. which has been variously rendered—(1) their dwellings, or habitations (Kimchi, A. V., Calvin, Ainsworth), in the land of their sojournings (Onkelos), for which, however, there does not seem to be much authority; (2) their machinations or wicked counsels, deriving from מָכַר, to string together, to take in a net, to ensnare (Nahum iii. 4), the cognate Arabic root signifying to deceive or practise stratagems (De Dieu, Schultens, Castelli, Tayler Lewis, and others); (3) their betrothals, or compacts of marriage, connecting with the same root as the preceding in the sense of "binding together" (Dathius, Clericus, Michaelis, Knobel, Fürst, *et alii*); (4) their rage, as suggested by the unused root כִּיד, to boil or seethe (Kalisch); (5) their swords, from כּוּר = כָּרָה, to dig or pierce through, cf. μάχαιρα (Vulgate, Luther, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Murphy, and others). The preponderance of authority appears to be in favour of this last. **O my soul, come not thou into their secret;**—literally, *into their council or assembly* (סוֹד, from יָסַד, to set or sit) *come not, my soul,* or *my soul shall not come* (cf. Prov. i. 15, 16) —**unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united**:—literally, *with or in their assembly or congregation* (קָהָל from קָהַל, to call together: cf. ch. xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11; xlviii. 4), *mine honour or glory* (*i. e.* the soul as being the noblest part of man: Ps. xvi. 9; lvii. 9; cviii. 2—the term כְּבֹדִי is parallel with the preceding נַפְשִׁי), *do not join* (Keil), or *shall not join* (Kalisch)—**for in their anger they slew a man,**—literally, *man*, a collective singular for "men," the plural form of אִישׁ occurring rarely; only in Ps. cxli. 4; Prov. viii. 4; and Isa. liii. 3—**and in their selfwill they digged down a wall** —literally, *they houghed ox* (LXX., Gesenius, Fürst, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Lange, Gerlach, T. Lewis, Murphy, &c., &c.), the singular שׁוֹר, the plural of which is only found once, in Hosea xii. 12, being retained here to correspond with אִישׁ. The received rendering, which is not without sanction (Onkelos, Targum of Jonathan, Syriac, Arabic, Aquila, Symmachus, Vulgate, Dathius, Calvin), reads שׁוּר instead of שׁוֹר, and takes עָקַר in the primary sense of *destruere, evertere*. **Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was**

cruel:—the second synonym "wrath," literally, *outpourings*, indicates the fulness and intensity of the tide of fury which by Simeon and Levi was let loose upon the unsuspecting Shechemites—**I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.** While for the sin (the deed, not the doers) Jacob has a curse, for the sinners themselves he has a well-merited chastisement. They had been confederate in their wickedness, they should in future, when returning to occupy their God-assigned inheritance, be disjoined. That this prediction was exactly fulfilled Scripture testifies. At the second census in the wilderness, shortly before the conquest, the tribe of Simeon had become so reduced in its numbers (reckoning only 22,000 as against 76,500 in Judah) as to be the smallest of the twelve (Numb. xxvi. 14); to be passed over entirely in the last blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii.); to be accorded no independent allotment of territory in Canaan on the completion of the conquest, having only a few cities granted to it within the borders of Judah (Josh. xix. 1—9); and to be ultimately absorbed in the more powerful and distinguished tribe under whose protection and tutelage, so to speak, it had been placed (1 Chron. iv. 27). The tribe of Levi also was deprived of a separate inheritance, receiving only a number of cities scattered here and there among the possessions of their brethren (Josh. xxi. 1, 40); and, though by its election to the priesthood the curse may be said to have been turned into a blessing, yet of this signal honour which was waiting Levi Jacob was completely silent, showing both that no prophecy was of any private interpretation (the seer seeing no further than the Holy Spirit helped him), and that Jacob spoke before the days of Moses. It is almost incredible that a late writer would have omitted to forecast the latter-day glory of the tribe of Levi; and this opinion is confirmed by observing the very different strain in which, after Levi's calling had been revealed, the benediction of Moses himself proceeds (Deut. xxxiii. 8—11).

Vers. 8—12.—**Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise**—literally, *Judah thou, will praise thee thy brethren*, the word יוֹדוּךָ being a palpable play on יְהוּדָה (cf. ch. xxix. 35). Leah praised Jehovah for his birth, and his brethren should extol him for his nobility of character, which even in his acts of sin could not be entirely obscured (ch. xxxvii. 26; xxxviii. 26), and certainly in his later days (ch. xliii. 8; xliv. 18—34) shone out with undiminished lustre. **Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies** (*i. e.* putting his foes to flight, Judah should grasp them by the neck, a prediction remarkably accomplished in the victories of David and Solomon); **thy father's children shall bow down before thee.** Fulfilled in the elevation of the house of Judah to the throne, which owned as its subjects not simply Judah's mother's children, *i. e.* the tribes descended from Leah, but also his father's, *i. e.* all the tribes of Israel. **Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched down as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?** By a bold and striking figure Judah is compared to a young lion, ripening into its full strength and ferocity, roaming through the forests in search of prey, repairing to his mountain den (*ἐκ βλάστοῦ ἀνέβης*, LXX.) when his booty has been devoured, and there in quiet majesty, full of dignified repose, lying down or crouching in his lair, and calmly resisting all attempts to disturb his leonine serenity. The effect of the picture is also heightened by the alternative image of a lioness, which is particularly fierce in defending its cubs, and which no one would venture to assail when so employed. The use of such figures to describe a strong and invincible hero is by no means infrequent in Scripture (*vide* Ps. vii. 3; lvii. 5; Isa. v. 29; Ezek. xix. 2—9). **The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,**—literally, *a sceptre* (i. e. an emblem of regal command, hence dominion or sovereignty; *ἄρχων*, LXX., Theodotion; *ἐξουσία*, Symmachus) *shall not depart from Judah*—**nor a lawgiver from between his feet**—literally, *and a legislator* (sc. shall not depart) *from between his feet*; מְחֹקֵק, the poel part. of חָקַק, to cut, to cut into, hence to decree, to ordain, having the sense of one who decrees; hence leader, as in Judges v. 44, *dux* (Vulgate), *ἡγούμενος* (LXX.), or lawgiver, as in Deut. xxxiii. 21 and Isa. xxxiii. 22 (Calvin, Dathius, Ainsworth, Rosenmüller, Murphy, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). In view, however, of what appears the requirement of the parallelism, מְחֹקֵק is regarded as not the person, but the thing, that determines or rules, and hence as equivalent to the ruler's staff, or marshal's baton (Gesenius, Fürst, Keil, Lange, Bleek, Tuch, Kalisch, and others), in support of which is claimed the phrase "from between his feet," which is supposed to point to the Oriental custom, as depicted on the monuments, of monarchs, when sitting upon their thrones, resting their staves between their feet (cf. Agamemnon, 'Iliad,' ii. 46, 101; Layard's 'Nineveh and Babylon,' p. 195). But the words may likewise signify "from among his descendants," "from among his children's children" (Onkelos), *ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ* (LXX.). **Until Shiloh come.** This difficult clause has been very variously rendered. 1. Taking Shiloh as the name of a place, viz., Shiloh in Ephraim (Josh. xviii. 1, 8, 9, 10; xix. 51;

Judges xviii. 31; 1 Sam. i. 3, 9, 24; ii. 14, &c.), the sense has been explained as meaning that the leadership of Judah over the other tribes of Israel should not cease until he came to Shiloh (Rabbi Lipmann, Teller, Eichhorn, Bleek, Fürst, Tuch, Delitzsch). But though וַיָּבֹא שִׁלֹה, and they came to Shiloh, a similar phrase, is found in 1 Sam. iv. 12, yet against this interpretation may be urged (1) the improbability of so obscure a locality, whose existence at the time is also problematical, being mentioned by Jacob, Zidon, the only other name occurring in the prophecy, having been, even before the days of Jacob, a city of renown (ch. x. 19); and (2) the inaccuracy of the historical statement which would thus be made, since the supremacy of Judah was in no way affected, and certainly not diminished, by the setting up of the tabernacle in Shiloh; to obviate which objection Kalisch proposes to read עַד כִּי as "even if," or "even when," and to understand the prediction as intimating that even though a new empire should be established at Shiloh, as was eventually done, Judah should not forfeit her royal name and prerogative—only this sense of עַד כִּי is not clearly recognised by the best grammarians (Gesenius, Fürst), and is not successfully supported by the passages referred to (ch. xxviii. 15; Ps. cx. 1; cxii. 8), in every one of which the received rendering "until" is distinctly preferable. 2. Regarding Shiloh as an abstract noun, from שָׁלָה to be safe, like גִּלֹה from גָּלָה, the import of the prophecy has been expressed as asserting that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, either until he (Judah) should attain to rest (Hofmann, Kurtz), or until tranquillity should come, *i. e.* until Judah's enemies should be subdued (Gesenius), an interpretation which Rosenmüller properly characterises as "*languidum et pœne frigidum.*" Hence—3. Believing Shiloh to be the name of a person, the majority of commentators, both Jewish and Christian, and ancient as well as modern, agree that the Messiah is the person referred to, and understand Jacob as fore-announcing that the time of his appearance would not be till the staff of regal power had dropped from the hands of Judah; only, the widest possible diversity exists among those who discover a Messianic reference in the prediction as to the exact significance of the term Shiloh. Some render it his son, or progeny, or (great) descendant, from an imaginary root, שִׁיל, which, after Chaldee and Arabic analogies, is supposed to mean "offspring" (Targum of Jonathan, Kimchi, Calvin, Ainsworth, and others); others, deriving it from שָׁלַח, to send, compare it with Siloam (John ix. 7) and Shiloah (Isa. viii. 6), and interpret it as *qui mittendus est* (Vulgate, Pererius, À Lapide, Grotius); a third class of expositors, connecting it with שָׁלָה, to be safe or at rest, view it as a *nomen appellatum*, signifying the Pacificator, the Rest-giver, the Tranquilliser, the Peace (Luther, Venema, Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, Keil, Gerlach, Murphy, &c.); while a fourth resolve it into אֲשֶׁר לוֹ, and conjecture it to signify, he to whom it (*sc.* the sceptre or the kingdom) belongs, or he whose right it is, as in Ezek. xxi. 27 (LXX., *ἕως ἐὰν ἔλθῃ τα ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ*; Aquila and Symmachus, *ᾧ ἀπόκειται*; Onkelos, Syriac, Saadias, Targum of Jerusalem, *et alii*). It seems indisputable that the preponderance of authority is in favour of the last two interpretations, and if שִׁילֹה be the correct reading, instead of שִׁלֹה (= שֶׁלֹּה = אֲשֶׁר לוֹ), as the majority of MSS. attest, it will be difficult to withhold from the former, "the Tranquilliser," the palm of superiority. The translations of Dathius (*quamdiu prolem habebit, ei gentes obedient*), who professes to follow Gulcher, who understands the words as a prophecy of the perpetuity of Judah's kingdom, fulfilled in David (2 Sam. vii.), and of Lange ("until he himself comes home as the Shiloh or Rest-bringer"), who also discerns in Judah a typical foreshadowing of the Messiah, may be mentioned as examples of ingenious, but scarcely convincing, exposition. **And unto him shall the gathering of the people be.** Not "*καὶ αὐτὸς προσδοκία ἐθνῶν*" (LXX.), *ipse erit expectatio gentium* (Vulgate), with which also agrees the Syriac, or "to him nations will flock" (Samaritan), *σύστημα λαῶν* (Aquila), but to him, *i. e.* Shiloh, will be not *aggregatio populorum* (Calvin), but the submission or willing obedience (a word occurring elsewhere only in Prov. xxx. 17) of nations or peoples (Onkelos, Targum of Jonathan, Kimchi, Aben Ezra, Dathius, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Gerlach, Murphy, Tayler Lewis, 'Speaker's Commentary'). **Binding his foal unto the vine,**—*i. e.* not Shiloh, but Judah. The verb אֹסְרִי has the archaic י appended, as in ch. xxxi. 39; Deut. xxxiii. 16; Zech. xi. 17—**and his ass's colt unto the choice vine.** The שֹׂרֵקָה (fem. of שֹׂרֵק) was a nobler kind of vine which grew in Syria, with small berries, roundish and of a dark colour, with soft and hardly perceptible stones (Gesenius, p. 796). בְּנִי is an archaic form of the construct state which occurs only here. **He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.** The word סוּת is a *ἅπαξ λεγόμενον*, and is either put by aphæresis for כְּסוּת, which occurs in the Samaritan

Version, or is derived from סָוָה, an uncertain root, signifying to cover (Gesenius, Kalisch). **His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.** Otherwise rendered "redder than wine," and "whiter than milk" (LXX., Vulgate, Targum of Jerusalem, *et alii*), as a description of Judah's person, which scarcely seems so appropriate as the received translation (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Lange, and others), which completes the preceding picture of Judah's prosperity. Not only would Judah's soil be so fertile that its vines should be employed for tying asses and colts to their branches, but the grapes of those vines should be so plentiful and luscious as to make wine run like the water in which he washed his clothes, while the wine and milk should be so exhilarating and invigorating as to impart a sparkling brilliance to the eyes and a charming whiteness to the teeth. The aged prophet, it has been appropriately remarked, has here no thought of debauchery, but only paints before the mind's eye a picture of the richest and most ornate enjoyment (Lange). *Minime consentaneum esse videtur profusam intemperiem et projectionem in benedictione conseri* (Calvin).

Ver. 13.—**Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea**;—not παρ' ὅρμον πλοίων (LXX.), *in statione navium* (Vulgate), but to, or at, or beside, the shore (from the idea of being washed by the waters of the ocean) of the waters, *i. e.* of the Galilean and Mediterranean seas—**and he** shall be **for an haven of ships**;—literally, *and he to, at, or on, a shore of ships*, i. e. a shore where ships are unloaded (*sc.* shall dwell), the words being a repetition of the previous thought, with only the expansion, suggested by the term *ships*, that Zebulun's calling should be in the direction of commerce;—**and his border** shall be **unto Zidon**—literally, *and his side, or hinder part* (sc. shall be, or extend), *towards*, rather than unto,—*usque ad* (Vulgate), ἕως (LXX.),—*Zidon*, since the territory subsequently allotted to Zebulun neither actually touched the Mediterranean, nor reached to Zidon—a circumstance that may be noted as an indirect hint that this prophecy was not spoken, or even first written, after the occupation of the land.

Vers. 14, 15.—**Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens**—literally, *an ass of bone*—hence a strong, powerful animal, *asinus fortis* (Vulgate), *asinus validi corporis* (Gesenius), *asinus robustus* (Rosenmüller)—*lying down between the folds*, or cattle-pens, which received and protected the flocks by night, the dual being used probably because such pens were divided into two parts for different kinds of cattle (Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary,' &c.), though the word *mishpetaim* has been also rendered ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν κλήρων (LXX.), *inter terminos* (Vulgate, Rosenmüller), "within their own boundaries" (Onkelos, Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan), "between two burdens" (A. V., Lange, Murphy, &c.). **And he saw that rest** was **good, and the land that** it was **pleasant.** Issachar was to manifest a keen appreciation of the land or portion of territory that should be assigned to him, and to renounce the warlike spirit and military enterprises of his brethren for the indolent and luxurious repose of his fat pastures, crouching between his sheep-folds, or rejoicing within his tents, like a lazy ass, capable indeed of mighty efforts, but too self-satisfied to put forth much exertion, devoting himself to agriculture and pastoral pursuits, and preferring rather to pay tribute to his brethren, in order to secure their protection, than to leave his ploughshare and cast aside his shepherd's crook to follow them into the tented field of war, as the patriarch next describes. **And bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute**—or a tributary servant. The phrase מַס־עֹבֵד, though sometimes used of servitude under a foreign sovereignty (Deut. xx. 11; Josh. xvi. 10), commonly refers to tribute rendered by labour (1 Kings ix. 21; 2 Chron. viii. 8), and is correctly rendered ἄνθρωπος εἰς φόρον δουλεύων (Aquila), *factusque est tributo serviens* (Vulgate). The translation καὶ ἐγενήθη ἀνὴρ γεωργός (LXX.) discovers in the clause an allusion to Issachar's agricultural pursuits.

Vers. 16—18.—**Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.** With a play upon his name, the firstborn son of Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah, is described as one who should occupy an important place and exercise highly beneficial functions in the future commonwealth, enjoying independence and self-government as one of the tribes of Israel (Herder, and others), and performing the office of an administrator among the people not of his own tribe merely, but also of all Israel, a prediction pointing perhaps to the transient supremacy enjoyed by Dan over the other tribes in the days of Samson (Onkelos, *et alii*). **Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.** The שְׁפִיפֹן, from the Syriac שְׁפַף, to glide (Gesenius), from שׁוּף, to sting (Kalisch), שָׁפַף, to bite (Fürst), was the horned serpent, *cerastes*, of the colour of sand, and marked with white and black spots, which was exceedingly dangerous to passers-by, its bite being poisonous and fatal. The allusion has been almost unanimously explained as pointing to Samson (Judges xvi. 28), but the tribe

in general appears not to have been entirely destitute of the treacherous and formidable characteristics here depicted (Judges xviii. 27). "It is certainly observable that the first introduction of idolatry in Israel is ascribed to the tribe of Dan (Judges xviii.), and that in the numbering of the tribes in Rev. vii. the name of Dan is omitted. From these or other causes many of the Fathers (Irenæus, Ambrose, Augustine, Theodoret) were led to believe that Antichrist should spring from the tribe of Dan" ('Speaker's Commentary'). **I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.** To discover in this beautiful and tender ejaculation of the dying patriarch an apprehensive sigh lest his strength should be exhausted before his benediction was completed (Tuch), or a prayer that God might speedily effect his painless dissolution (Hengstenberg), or a device for dividing his benedictions, and separating the group of Judah from that of Joseph (Lange), is surely to fail in seizing its hidden spirit. It is doubtful if even the usual interpretation, that Jacob here expresses his hope and expectation that God would help and succour his descendants (Calvin, Rosenmüller, Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, and others), exhausts its rich significance. That, speaking in their name, he does anticipate the deliverance of Jehovah—"In thy help do I hope, O Jehovah!"—is apparent; but nothing surely can be more natural than to suppose that the dying patriarch, at the moment when he was formally transmitting to his children the theocratic blessing, had his thoughts lifted up towards that great salvation, of which all these material and temporal benedictions pronounced upon his sons were but the shadows and the types, and of which perhaps he had been incidentally reminded by the mention of the biting serpent, to which he had just likened Dan ('Speaker's Commentary'). It is noticeable that this is the first occurrence of the term salvation (יְשׁוּעָה, from the root יָשַׁע, unused in Kal, to be roomy or spacious, hence in the Hiphil to set free or deliver).

Ver. 19.—**Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.** The threefold alliteration of the original, which is lost in the received translation, may be thus expressed: "Gad—a press presses him, but he presses the heel" (Keil); or, "troops shall troop on him, but he shall troop on their retreat" ('Speaker's Commentary'). The language refers to attacks of nomadic tribes which would harass and annoy the Gadites, but which they would successfully repel.

Ver. 20.—**Out of Asher his bread** shall be **fat, and he shall yield royal dainties**—literally, *dainties of, or for, the king.* The first clause may be otherwise rendered: Of Asher the bread shall be fat (Kalisch); fat shall be his bread (Murphy); Out of Asher (cometh) fat his bread (Keil). The import of the blessing is that Asher should possess a specially productive soil.

Ver. 21.—**Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.** The LXX., followed by Dathe, Michaelis, Ewald, Bohlen, and others, read, Naphtali is a tall terebinth, that putteth forth beautiful boughs; but the word אַיָּלָה signifies a hind or gazelle, and is here employed, along with the qualifying epithet שְׁלֻחָה, let loose, running freely (Keil), or graceful (Kalisch), to depict Naphtali as a beautiful and agile warrior. In the appended clause he is represented as possessing in addition the capacity of "giving words of beauty," in which may be detected an allusion to the development in eloquence and song which afterwards took place in that northern tribe (Judges iv. 6—9; v. 1—31).

Vers. 22—26.—**Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall**—literally, *son of a fruit tree, Joseph; son of a fruit tree at the well; daughters run* (each one of them: *vide* Gesenius, 'Grammar,' § 146, 4) *over the wall.* The structure of the clauses, the order of the words, the repetition of the thoughts, supply a glimpse into the fond emotion with which the aged prophet approached the blessing of his beloved son Joseph. Under the image of a fruit tree, probably a vine, as in Ps. lxxx., planted by a well, whence it draws forth necessary moisture, and, sending forth its young twigs or offshoots over the supporting walls, he pictures the fruitfulness and prosperity which should afterwards attend the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, as the twofold representative of Joseph, with perhaps a backward glance at the service which Joseph had performed in Egypt by gathering up and dispensing the produce of the land for the salvation of his family and people. **The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him**—literally, *they provoked him, and shot at, and laid snares for him, masters of arrows,* though Kalisch translates וָרֹבּוּ, and they assembled in multitudes, which yields a sense sufficiently clear. It is sometimes alleged (Keil, Lange, 'Speaker's Commentary') that the words contain no allusion to the personal history of Joseph, but solely to the later fortunes of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh; but even if they do point to the subsequent hostilities which Joseph's descendants should incur (Josh. xvii. 16—18; Judges xii. 4—6), it is almost morally certain that the image of the shooting archers which he selects to depict their adversaries was suggested to his mind by the early lot of his beloved son (Calvin,

Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Gerlach, Murphy, and others). **But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty** God **of Jacob.** Notwithstanding the multitudinous and fierce assaults which had been made on Joseph, he had risen superior to his adversaries; his bow had continued firm and unbroken (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 4; Job xii. 19; xxxiii. 19), and his arms had been rendered active and flexible—neither ἐξελύθη τὰ νεῦρα βραχιόνων χειρὸς αὐτῶν (LXX.), *dissoluta sunt vincula brachiorum et manuum* (Vulgate), as if Joseph's enemies were the subjects referred to; nor, "Therefore gold was placed upon his arms" (Onkelos, Rashi, and others), referring to the gift of Pharaoh's ring—by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, *i. e.* God, who had proved himself to be Jacob's Mighty One by the powerful protection vouchsafed to his servant. The title here ascribed to God occurs afterwards in Isa. i. 24. **From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.** If the clause is parenthetical, it may signify either that from the time of Joseph's exaltation he became the shepherd (who sustained) and the stone of (*i. e.* the rock which supported) Israel (Oleaster), or that from God, the Mighty One of Jacob, Joseph received strength to become the shepherd and stone of Israel (Pererius, Ainsworth, Lawsen, Patrick, and others), in which capacity he served as a prefiguration of the Good Shepherd who was also to become the Rock or Foundation of his Church (Calvin, Pererius, Candlish, &c.); but if the clause is rather co-ordinate with that which precedes and that which follows, as the introductory particle מִן appears to suggest, then the words "shepherd and stone of Israel" will apply to God, and the sentiment will be that the hands of Joseph were made strong from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, from there (*i. e.* from there where is, or from him who is) the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel (Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Gerlach, Lange, *et alii*). Even **by the God of thy father, who shall help thee** (literally, *from the God of thy father, and he shall help thee*, i. e. who shall help thee); **and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee**—literally, *and with* (sc. the aid of) *the Almighty, and he shall bless thee.* It is unnecessary to change וְאֵת into וְאֵל (LXX., Vulgate, Samaritan, Syriac, Ewald), or to insert מִן before אֵת, as thus, מֵאֵת (Knobel, Rosenmüller, Kalisch), since אֵת may be understood here, as in ch. iv. 1; v. 24, in the sense of helpful communion (Keil)—**with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.** "From the God of Jacob, and by the help of the Almighty, should the rain and dew of heaven (ch. xxvii. 28), and fountains and brooks which spring from the great deep or the abyss of the earth, pour their fertilising waters over Joseph's land, so that everything that had womb and breast should become pregnant, bring forth and suckle" (Keil). **The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.** The meaning is, according to this rendering, which some adopt (the Targums, Vulgate, Syriac, Saadias, Rosenmüller, Lange, Murphy, *et alii*), that the blessings which Jacob pronounced upon Joseph surpassed those which he himself had received from Abraham and Isaac, either as far as the primary mountains towered above the earth (Keil, Murphy), or, while exceeding the benedictions of his ancestors, those now delivered by himself would last while the hills endured (Rosenmüller, 'Speaker's Commentary'). But the words may be otherwise rendered: "The blessings of thy father prevail over, are mightier than the blessings of the mountains of eternity, the delight, or glory, or loveliness of the hills of eternity" (LXX., Dathe, Michaelis, Gesenius, Bohlen, Kalisch, Gerlach, and others); and in favour of this may be adduced the beautiful parallelism between the last two clauses, which the received translation overlooks. **They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren**—literally, *of him, the separated* (from *nazar*, to separate) *from his brethren* (Onkelos, Rashi, Rosenmüller, Keil, and others), though by some different renderings are preferred, as, *e. g.*, the crowned among his brethren (LXX. Syriac, Targum of Jerusalem, Kimchi, Kalisch, Gerlach), taking *nazir* to signify he who wears the *nezer*, or royal diadem.

Ver. 27.—**Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf** (literally, *a wolf, he shall tear in pieces*): **in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.** The prediction alludes to the warlike character of the tribe of Benjamin, which was manifested in Ehud the judge (Judges iii. 15), and Saul the king of Israel (1 Sam. xi. 6—11; xiv. 13, 15, 47, 48), who both sprang from Rachel's younger son.

Ver. 28.—**All these are the twelve tribes of Israel** (the underlying thought is that in blessing his sons Jacob was really blessing the future tribes): **and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them** (*i. e.* every one received his own appropriate benediction).

Vers. 29, 30.—**And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people** (*vide* on ch. xv. 15): **bury me with my fathers**—thus laying on them the injunction he had previously, with the superadded solemnity of an oath, laid on Joseph

(ch. xlvii. 29—31)—**in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place** (*vide* ch. xxiii. 16—20). Jacob had learnt from his father and had carefully preserved all the details relating to the purchase of their family sepulchre. **There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.** From this it would appear that Leah had not descended into Egypt.

Ver. 32.—**The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.** Kalisch connects the present verse with the 30th, and reads ver. 31 as a parenthesis.

Ver. 33.—**And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed** (having on the arrival of Joseph strengthened himself and sat up upon the bed, probably with his feet overhanging its edge), **and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people** (*vide* on ch. xxv. 8; xxxv. 29).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—33.—*The patriarchal blessing, or the last words of Jacob.* I. The sons of Leah. 1. *The blessing on Reuben.* (1) A declaration of Reuben's natural precedence, as the first-born in Jacob's family, the beginning of Jacob's strength, and therefore the legitimate heir of Jacob's house. (2) A proclamation of Reuben's deposition from this honourable position: "Boiling as water, thou shalt not have the precedence," *i. e.* the birthright is taken from thee, and assigned to another. (3) A statement of Reuben's sin, as the reason of this forfeiture of the firstborn's place: "because thou wentest up to thy father's bed: then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch." 2. *The blessings on Simeon and Levi.* It is only by a species of irony that the words pronounced on the authors of the Shechem massacre can be styled a blessing. (1) The patriarch expresses his abhorrence of their atrocious wickedness, describing them with a refined sarcasm as brethren, confederates in sin as well as the offspring of common parents, characterising their swords, or their compacts, or their rage, or their machinations, according to the translation adopted, as instruments of violence, and shudderingly recoiling from the least association with two such reckless murderers, who in their wrathful fury spared neither man nor beast: "Man they slew, and ox they houghed." (2) He pronounces a solemn curse upon their sin. Not upon themselves, it is noticeable, but upon their deed, meaning that while God might mercifully pardon transgressors such as they had been, he could not do otherwise than reveal his wrath against appalling wickedness like theirs. (3) He allots to them a punishment appropriate to their offence: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." 3. *The blessing upon Judah.* Recalling probably the part which his fourth son had played with reference to Benjamin, Jacob fervently declares that Judah should be—(1) The admiration of his brethren: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise;" and "thy father's children shall bow down unto thee." (2) The terror of his foes: "thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies;" "Judah is a lion's whelp," &c. (3) The ancestor of the Messiah, whose character he defines by the term Shiloh, whose advent he marks by the time: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver (or ruler's staff) from between his feet, until Shiloh come;" and the result of his appearance: "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (4) The possessor of a prosperous domain, whose vine-trees should be abundant, and whose pasture grounds should be fertile. 4. *The blessing on Zebulun.* With allusion to the import of his name, Jacob prophesies that Leah's sixth son should be the ancestor of a flourishing community devoted to commercial pursuits, with a territory reaching towards the sea-coast, where ships should come to load and unload their cargoes of merchandise. 5. *The blessing on Issachar.* The last mentioned son of Leah, though the fifth in the order of birth, the patriarch predicts should develop into a powerful and sagacious tribe, capable of great exertion and warlike achievements, but addicted to pastoral pursuits, and so fond of luxuriant repose, that for the sake of resting among his sheepfolds and in his fat meadows he should be willing to fulfil the mute anticipation of his name, and render tribute to his more heroic brethren.

II. The sons of the concubines. 1. *The blessing on Dan.* Dan was the firstborn

of Bilhah, the maid of Rachel; and concerning him the patriarch announces—(1) That though the child of a secondary wife, his descendants should attain to the position of an independent and self-governing tribe: "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel"; (2) That if not as a tribe, yet as individuals, and if not permanently, yet occasionally, they should manifest the qualities of sudden, unexpected, and even treacherous attack that were so remarkably characteristic of the horned serpent; (3) That he should enjoy, in all the perils to which he might in future be exposed, the gracious succour of Jehovah—a thought which appears to elevate the speaker's soul to the contemplation of another and higher keeper, who was yet to come to heal the fatal bite of that great serpent the Devil, who had injected his mortal virus into the race. 2. *The blessing on Gad.* The firstborn of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, obtains the next place in the order of the sons, and concerning him it is declared with a threefold play upon his name, which signifies a troop, that—(1) He will be sore pressed on every side by troops of marauding foes; but that—(2) He will in the end prove himself to be victorious over the fiercest and the boldest. 3. *The blessing on Asher.* The happy one should be the occupier of a territory exceeding fertile, and capable of yielding rich and dainty fruits for royal tables. 4. *The blessing on Naphtali.* Naphtali was Bilhah's child, which Rachel named in honour of her triumphant wrestling or contending with her sister; and for him were reserved the gifts of a graceful exterior, agile movements, and attractive speech both in eloquence and song.

III. THE SONS OF RACHEL. 1. *The blessing on Joseph.* With a fulness and tenderness of paternal emotion like that with which already he had spoken of Judah, the expiring patriarch declares the fortunes of Joseph, setting forth—(1) The general prosperity that awaited him, representing him as the son (or offshoot) of a fruit-tree planted by a well, and rushing up into such luxuriance of growth that its branches (or daughters) overhung the walls that gave it support; (2) The severe adversity to which in early years he had been exposed, and of which in future his descendants should have experience, comparing him to one whom the archers shot at and hated, and fiercely persecuted; (3) The heavenly succour which had enabled him to overcome his bitter trials, and which would yet advance his children to safety, viz., the assistance of the mighty God of Jacob, the Shepherd and Stone of Israel, the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac; (4) The wealth of Benediction that should descend upon the head of him who had been separated from his brethren, viz., blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb, blessings that should surpass those bestowed on any of his progenitors, or, according to the more correct rendering, that should outlast the everlasting hills. 2. *The blessing on Benjamin.* Though latest born of Jacob's family, he should not be the least important, but should show himself possessed of a warlike and adventurous disposition, causing him with eagerness and animation to take the field against the foe, and to desist not from battle till he could lead back his legions as rejoicing conquerors, enriched with the spoils of glorious victory.

Learn—1. That God is the great arbiter of human destiny. 2. That each man's sphere in life, as well as each nation's place on earth, is adapted to his or its peculiar character. 3. That though fore-appointed and fore-known, the destinies of men and nations are freely wrought out by themselves. And—4. That in Providence as well as Grace, it often happens that the first becomes last, and the last first.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. xlix.—*Last words.* Jacob's benediction on his sons was a prophetic treasure, to be kept in store by future generations, and a foundation on which much faith could afterwards be built. It has been called "the last full bloom of patriarchal prophecy and theocratic promise." The central point, the blessing on the royal tribe of Judah. The corresponding eminence being given to Joseph. The Israel blessing to the one, the Jacob blessing to the other. In each case we distinguish—1. *The earthly basis of the blessing* in the tribe itself. 2. The *nearest fulfilments* of it in the temporal history. 3. The *symbolical import* pointing to a remoter fulfilment. We may compare the many dying scenes of the Bible with this; as the last words of *Isaac, Moses,*

Joshua, Samuel, David, Simeon, Stephen, Paul, Peter, and the *apocalyptic visions* of John. Compare especially the *song of Moses*, and the *prophecy of Balaam*. It seems possible that the beautiful exclamation, ver. 18, "*I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*," was intended to form a kind of middle point, separating the groups of blessings into one of seven, and another of five. The first group has *a Messianic character*, the second a *wider, cosmopolitan*. In the first, *Judah*, the royal tribe, represents the theocracy. In the second, *Joseph*, the link of connection between Israel and Egypt, represents the kingdom of Christ becoming the universal kingdom, from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. The whole is a typical representation of "Israel" in the higher sense. 1. *It comes out of sinful human nature.* 2. *It is developed by the grace of God in human history.* 3. *It stands upon the Divine order* of the twelve tribes, the revealed truth, and the Divinely sanctioned religious life and institutions. 4. The *essential element* in the history, is the *Messiah coming out of Judah*, the shepherd of Israel, the stone of help out of Joseph, the Nazarite, the tried man, the blessed one. 5. *The kingdom of Christ is the universal blessedness* of the world. When Jacob has handed on his blessing to his heirs, he gathers up his feet into the bed, yields up the ghost, and is gathered to his people. When the carnal Israel is done with, the spiritual Israel remains. When the promises of God shall be fulfilled, then there shall be no more concern with the earthly pilgrimage. "The blessings prevail unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."—R.

Vers. 8—12.—*Judah's portion.* "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise," &c. This dying vision and the utterances of the dying patriarch seem in harmony with all the surroundings in this part of the sacred record. The aged Jacob is dying. He has passed through such changes, such trials and successes, has had such seasons of depression and of exultation, but now his soul is filled with rapture at what will be the future of his children. He saw how he would live in his children. A man should not be indifferent to his name dying out. Some are, but only such as are not of intense nature. As a man nearing the close of life, great importance was attached, by his son, to his utterances. On a farewell festive occasion, Isaac partook of venison before giving his blessing to Jacob and Esau. Jacob called all his sons together, as he was dying, and seems to have had supernatural strength given to utter so many and distinct prophecies. He knew the individual character of his sons, and so could better foretell, almost apart from Divine inspiration, what would be their future. The words uttered on the borders of the other land seemed necessarily inspired. Such a man as Jacob would no more pass away, if possible, without such utterances, than would a millionnaire think of dying without a will. No mere offspring of a disordered brain, or over-excited imagination, were these words. They were actual prophecies. Jacob was not only a patriarch, but a prophet. He speaks under the influence of the God of his fathers (ch. xlviii. 15), and the future bore out what he had foretold. We wish to consider chiefly the utterances concerning one tribe, Judah.

I. A PROPHECY OF POWER. His enemies were "to flee before him," &c. As victor he lays his hands on their necks, that they may be subject and yet live. His brethren were to acknowledge his power. He is to be as a young lion in agility, and as an old lion with the strength of years remaining, whom none will dare to anger. All this seems to be the glorification of mere physical power. Spiritual power is to be desired above the physical. And this we have in Christ.

II. A PROPHECY OF PRECEDENCY. Jacob seems to have come at last upon the one for whom he was seeking. He speaks of Judah as one whom his brethren shall praise. This is said to be "a play upon the name, Judah, as meaning one who is celebrated." And the name of Judah was accepted afterwards by the whole nation. We should have thought that if the firstborn, Reuben, had not been placed first, Joseph would have been. Judah's character, however, was more noble in some things even than that of Joseph. He did not delight in the wrong-doing of the brethren. Jacob may in his mind have blamed Joseph, in that he had not sought to know whether his father was alive before circumstances of death drove him to know of his still being alive. Judah was always ever ready to sacrifice himself, to be bound for his brother. There seems to have been much that was noble in him. Hence, we can understand, in a

measure, the precedency accorded to him. Precedency is not to be sought for its own sake. It is then only another form of vanity. When precedency is forced on men, it is because their worth and their usefulness to others is recognised by others, although not by themselves. How remarkable it is that God often selected the younger before the elder, *e. g.* Abel, Jacob, Moses, David. Judah is taken before Reuben. A lesson evidently taught in this, viz., that God is no respecter of persons, that he seeth not as man seeth, that the course of spiritual feeling does not always follow the line of birth.

III. PROPHECY OF PERMANENCY. This permanency was comparative in one sense and actual in another. Judah lasted longer than any of the tribes as a distinct power, and, since Christ came of that tribe, may be said to be permanent still. Who thinks of Naphtali, or Zebulun, or Issachar? but Judah is a name most familiar. The "sceptre" is the sheik's staff, which, like a marshal's baton, indicates his right to lead. Judah was to lead, and to give the law until Shiloh came; and he did. Shiloh evidently points to the Messiah. It is a mystic name (comp. ch. xlviii. 16; Is. ix. 6; xi. 1). Some render this passage, "Until he [Judah] comes as the rest-giver;" others, "until he comes to whom it belongs." Christ is the only rightful rest-giver, and to him alone belongs all honour and praise. We see that the aim of God with respect to the descendants of Jacob was to provide a race which should keep alive a knowledge of God in the world until the Messiah should come. When that race had fulfilled this mission, it dropped into line with the rest of the nations. It is no longer to lead. We see that as ten tribes were broken off by Jeroboam from Judah, they were carried captive by the Assyrians, and with that nation swallowed up in oblivion, never, probably, to be known of again. And so with the Jews; they no longer lead. Although still retaining much that is distinctive, they will gradually, we believe, assimilate with other nations, and, accepting Christ, be one with other Christians in that one fold of mercy he has provided. Christ unites us to God and to others, breaks down middle walls of partition, gives to us also "life eternal," so that when this life shall fail, we shall be received into "everlasting habitations," and know as real a permanency as that of Judah.

IV. PROPHECY OF PROSPERITY. In the eleventh verse, Jacob indicates the sort of territory Judah will have,—one rich in vineyards and oliveyards. He foretells his prosperity during the period intervening between the prophecy and the advent of Shiloh. The twelfth verse means, that "his eyes should be redder than wine," *i. e.* brilliant with joy. The words "white as milk" refer to purity as well as prosperity. Both are found in Christ. True joy and purity shall draw souls to Christ. "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." His truth has "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." How much that is foretold of Judah is only typical of Jesus. He is the true conqueror, ruler, object of praise. He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), the "desire of all nations" (Hag. ii. 7), the one who if lifted up would draw all unto him (John xii. 32), the one in whom all the children of God are to be gathered in one (John xi. 52).

Learn—1. We find much to confirm faith in the way in which the prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled. 2. We find much to lead us to seek to be in Christ, through whom Judah obtained such blessings antecedently. 3. We find something to lead us to ask as to whether we have grown in purity, power, and whether our souls prosper and are in health.—H.

Ver. 10.—*The coming of Shiloh.* Remarkable agreement of ancient interpreters, Jewish as well as Christian, to consider this a prophecy of Messiah. The former of special value, as being before the event. The Targum of Onkelos renders the passage, "until Messiah comes, whose is the kingdom." Many others equally distinct. Some have observed that the words, "Shiloh shall come," make in Hebrew the same number as the name "Messiah." Ancient Christian writers all take the same view. The name Shiloh expresses rest or peace. Observe how this answers the need of man. Sin brought the curse of labour (ch. iii. 17—19), and unrest (Isa. lvii. 20, 21), and want of peace. Hence the frequent mention of rest, which, however, was only typical and temporary (Heb. iv. 8). Hence the common salutation, "Peace be unto you." And rest and peace are ours through the coming of Christ (Matt. xi. 28; John x. 28; Rom. viii. 38).

I. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL A PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST. The moral law convincing of sin (Gal. iii. 24). The ceremonial law foreshadowing restoration (Heb. x 1); the prophets declaring God's purpose, and the person and work of Christ; the dispersion by the captivity, bringing the people into contact with other nations, and thus preparing for a universal Church; their sufferings and state of subjection after their return, keeping alive the expectation of "Messiah, the prince."

II. THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD A PREPARATION FOR CHRIST. The colonising instinct of the Greeks making their language almost universal; the contact of Greek and Jewish learning at Alexandria and elsewhere, by which the heathen language was made capable of expressing Divine truth; the widespread power and organisation of the Romans, by which in so many ways the fulfilment of prophecy was brought about (Luke ii. 1; John xix. 36, 37).

III. FOR WHAT SHILOH SHOULD COME. To gather all nations unto himself (Isa. ii. 2, 3; John xi. 52; xii. 32). To redeem mankind, both Jews and Gentiles (Ps. xlix. 15; Isa. xxxv. 4—10; John x. 16; Gal. iv. 5). To bear the sins of mankind (Isa. liii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 24). To teach his people the way of life (Deut. xviii. 15; Matt. xi. 27; John iv. 25). To reign over his people (Dan. ii. 44; Rev. xi. 15). To give them victory (Ps. xliv. 5; 1 John v. 4; Rev. xii. 11).

IV. LESSON OF ENCOURAGEMENT. Why doubt God's acceptance of thee? or his readiness to help? Mark his desire that all should be saved (Ezek. xviii. 32; 1 Tim. ii. 4). Mark how this is the ruling principle running through the whole Bible. The work of Christ was no newly devised thing, but "that which was from the beginning" (1 Pet. i. 20). All our imperfections, all our weakness of faith is known to God, yet such as we are, he bids us trust in Christ's work. Judah himself was a very imperfect character. His descendants not less so. Yet of them the text was spoken. "Be not afraid, only believe."—M.

Ver. 18.—*God's salvation.* I. WHAT IT IS. Deliverance from evil, succour against foes, victory over sin and death.

II. WHENCE IT COMES. The primal fountain is Jehovah, the covenant God of the believer. The salvation of the gospel is God's in its original conception and proclamation, in its subsequent procurement and donation, in its ultimate development and consummation.

III. HOW IT IS OBTAINED. Not by merit, or by works, but by believing, and waiting, and hoping. "He that believeth shall be saved." "The Lord loveth them that hope in his mercy." "It is good for a man both to hope, and to quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."—W.

Ver. 18.—*A dying saint's exercise.* I. ADORATION. "O Lord!" Jehovah the God of redemption, the supreme object of worship.

II. MEDITATION. "Thy salvation!" What a theme for the thoughts to dwell on God's salvation in its origin, in its greatness, in its freeness, &c.

III. EXPECTATION. "For thy salvation do I hope." Hope is the expectation of future good, and presupposes faith as its ground-work and support.—W.

Ver. 26.—*The separated one, or Joseph a type of Christ.* Joseph was separated from his brethren—

I. IN HIS FATHER'S AFFECTIONS. Jacob loved him more than any of his other sons. So was Christ the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of the Father.

II. IN HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER. Joseph brought unto Jacob the evil report that he heard circulating about his brethren, thus proving that he had no sympathy with their wicked ways. So Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

III. IN HIS HEAVENLY COMMUNICATIONS. Joseph was favoured above his brethren in being made the recipient of dreams, and the depositary, as it were, of Divine secrets. And Christ received not the Spirit by measure, so that of him it could be said, No man knoweth the Father but the Son.

IV. IN HIS EVIL FORTUNES. Joseph was hated, sold, and practically given over to

death by his brethren. So was Christ not only despised and rejected by his brethren, but separated from all mankind in the character of his sufferings and death.

V. In his future exaltation. Joseph became the governor of Egypt, and the saviour of his family. And Christ after his resurrection was exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour for mankind.—W.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER L.

Ver. 1.—**And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.** Joseph had no doubt closed the eyes of his revered and beloved parent, as God had promised to the patriarch that he would (ch. xlvi. 4), and now, in demonstration both of the intensity of his love and of the bitterness of his sorrow, he sinks upon the couch upon which the lifeless form is lying, bending over the pallid countenance with warm tears, and imprinting kisses of affection on the cold and irresponsive lip. It is neither unnatural nor irreligious to mourn for the dead; and he must be callous indeed who can see a parent die without an outburst of tender grief.

Ver. 2.—**And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians**—literally, *the healers*, הָרֹפְאִים from רָפָא, to sew together, to mend, hence to heal, a class of persons which abounded in Ancient Egypt, each physician being only qualified to treat a single disorder (Herod., ii. 84). The medical men of Egypt were held in high repute abroad, and their assistance was at various times required by persons from other countries, as, *e. g.*, Cyrus and Darius (Herod., iii. 1, 132). Their knowledge of medicines was extensive, and is referred to both in sacred (Jer. lxvi. 11) and profane (Homer, 'Odyssey,' iv. 229) writings. The Egyptian doctors belonged to the sacerdotal order, and were expected to know all things relating to the body, and diseases and remedies contained in the six last of the sacred books of Hermes. According to Pliny (vii. 56), the study of medicine originated in Egypt (*vide* Wilkinson in Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' vol. ii. pp. 116, 117). The physicians employed by Joseph were those attached to his own household, or the court practitioners—**to embalm his father**: —literally, *to spice or season* (the body of) *his father*, i. e. to prepare it for burial by means of aromatics; *ut aromatibus condirent* (Vulgate); *ἐνταφιάσαι τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ* (LXX.), which is putting part of a proceeding for the whole (Tayler Lewis). According to Herodotus (ii. 86), the embalmers belonged to a distinct hereditary class or guild from the ordinary physicians; but either their formation into such a separate order of practitioners was of later origin (Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Kalisch), or Jacob was embalmed by the physicians instead of the embalmers proper because, not being an Egyptian, he could not be subjected to the ordinary treatment of the embalming art ('Speaker's Commentary')—**and the physicians embalmed Israel.** The method of preparing mummies in Ancient Egypt has been elaborately described, both by Herodotus (ii. 86) and Diodorus Siculus (i. 91), and, in the main, the accuracy of their descriptions has been confirmed by the evidence derived from the mummies themselves. According to the most expensive process, which cost one talent of silver, or about £250 sterling, the brain was first extracted through the nostrils by means of a crooked piece of iron, the skull being thoroughly cleansed of any remaining portions by rinsing with drugs; then, through an opening in the left side made with a sharp Ethiopian knife of agate or of flint, the viscera were removed, the abdomen being afterwards purified with palm wine and an infusion of aromatics; next, the disembowelled corpse was filled with every sort of spicery except frankincense, and the opening sewed up; after that the stuffed form was steeped for seventy days in natrum or subcarbonate of soda obtained from the Libyan desert, and sometimes in wax and tanning, bitumen also being employed in later times; and finally, on the expiration of that period, which was scrupulously observed, the body was washed, wrapped about with linen bandages, smeared over with gum, decorated with amulets, sometimes with a network of porcelain bugles, covered with a linen shroud, and, in due course, transferred to a mummy case (*vide* Wilkinson's 'Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians,' vol. iii. p. 471, ed. 1878; Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' vol. ii. pp. 118—123).

Ver. 3.—**And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those who are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned** (literally, *wept*) **for him threescore and ten days**—*i. e.* the whole period of mourning, including the forty days for embalming, extended to seventy days, a statement which strikingly coincides with the assertion of Diodorus Siculus (i. 72), that the embalming process occupied about thirty days, while the mourning continued seventy-two days; the first number, seventy,

being seven decades, or ten weeks of seven days, and the second 12 × 6 = 72, the duodecimal calculation being also used in Egypt (*vide* Wilkinson in Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' vol. ii. p. 121; and in 'Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians' vol. iii. p. 471, *et seqq.*, ed. 1878). The apparent discrepancy between the accounts of Genesis and Herodotus will disappear if the seventy days of the Greek historian, during which the body lay in *natrum*, be viewed as the entire period of mourning (Hengstenberg's 'Egypt and the Books of Moses,' p. 68; Sir G. Wilkinson in Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' vol. ii. p. 121), a sense which the words *ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσαντες ταριχεύουσι λίτρῳ, κρύψαντες ἡμέρας ἑβδομήκοντα* (Herod. ii. 86) will bear, though Kalisch somewhat arbitrarily, but unconvincingly, pronounces it to be "excluded both by the context and Greek syntax."

Vers. 4, 5.—**And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh,**—that Joseph did not address himself directly to Pharaoh, but through the members of the royal household, was not owing to the circumstance that, being arrayed in mourning apparel, he could not come before the king (Rosenmüller), since it is not certain that this Persian custom (Esther iv. 2) prevailed in Egypt, but is supposed to have been due, either to a desire on Joseph's part to put himself on a good understanding with the priesthood who composed the courtly circle, since the interment of the dead was closely connected with the religious beliefs of Egypt (Hävernick), or, what was more likely, to the fact that Joseph, having, according to Egyptian custom (Herod. ii. 36), allowed his beard and hair to grow, could not enter the king's presence without being both shaven and shorn (Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Keil). It has been suggested (Kalisch) that Joseph's power may have been restricted after the expiration of the famine, or that another Pharaoh may have succeeded to the throne who was not so friendly as his predecessor with the grand vizier of the realm; but such conjectures are not required to render Joseph's conduct in this matter perfectly intelligible—**saying, My father made me swear** (ch. xlvii. 29), **saying** (*i. e.* my father saying), **Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me**—not bought (Onkelos, Drusius, Ainsworth, Bohlen, and others), but digged, *ὤρυξα* (LXX.), *fodi* (Vulgate). Jacob may have either enlarged the original cave at Machpelah, or prepared in it the special niche which he designed to occupy—**in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore** (literally, *and now*) **let me go up, I pray thee** (the royal permission was required to enable Joseph to pass beyond the boundaries of Egypt, especially when accompanied by a large funeral procession), **and bury my father, and I will come again.**

Ver. 6.—**And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.** Pharaoh's answer would, of course, be conveyed through the courtiers.

Vers. 7—9.—**And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh** (*i. e.* the chief officers of the royal palace, as the next clause explains), **the elders of his house** (*i. e.* of Pharaoh's house), **and all the elders of the land of Egypt** (*i. e.* the nobles and State officials), **and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him** (as an escort) **both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.** Delineations of funeral processions, of a most elaborate character, may be seen on the monuments. A detailed and highly interesting account of the funeral procession of an Egyptian grandee, enabling us to picture to the mind's eye the scene of Jacob's burial, will be found in Wilkinson's 'Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians,' vol. iii. p. 444, ed. 1878. First servants led the way, carrying tables laden with fruit, cakes, flowers, vases of ointment, wine and other liquids, with three young geese and a calf for sacrifice, chairs and wooden tablets, napkins, and other things. Then others followed bearing daggers, bows, fans, and the mummy cases in which the deceased and his ancestors had been kept previous to burial. Next came a table of offerings, fauteuils, couches, boxes, and a chariot. After these men appeared with gold vases and more offerings. To these succeeded the bearers of a sacred boat and the mysterious eye of Osiris, as the god of stability. Placed in the consecrated boat, the hearse containing the mummy of the deceased was drawn by four oxen and by seven men, under the direction of a superintendent who regulated the march of the funeral. Behind the hearse followed the male relations and friends of the deceased, who either beat their breasts, or gave token of their sorrow by their silence and solemn step as they walked, leaning on their long sticks; and with these the procession closed.

Ver. 10.—**And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad.** The threshing-floor, or *goren*, was a large open circular area which was used for trampling out the corn by means of oxen, and was exceedingly convenient for the accommodation of a large body of people such as accompanied Joseph. The goren at which the funeral party halted was named Atad (*i. e.* Buckthorn), either from the name

of the owner, or from the quantity of buckthorn which grew in the neighbourhood. **Which is beyond Jordan**—literally, *on the other side of the Jordan*, i. e. west side, if the narrator wrote from his own standpoint (Jerome, Drusius, Ainsworth, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Wordsworth, *et alii*), in which case the funeral train would in all probability follow the direct route through the country of the Philistines, and Goren Atad would be situated somewhere south of Hebron, in the territory (afterwards) of Judah; but east side of the river if the phrase must be interpreted from the standpoint of Palestine (Clericus, Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Keil, Lange, Gerlach, Hävernick, Murphy, and others), in which case the burial procession must have journeyed by the wilderness, as the Israelites on a latter occasion did, and probably for not dissimilar reasons. In favour of the former interpretation may be claimed ver. 11, which says the Canaanites beheld the mourning, implying seemingly that it occurred within the borders of Canaan, *i. e.* on the west of the Jordan; while support for the latter is derived from ver. 13, which appears to state that after the lamentation at Goren Atad the sons of Jacob carried him into Canaan, almost necessarily involving the inference that Goren Atad was on the east of the Jordan; but *vide infra*. If the former is correct, Goren Atad was probably the place which Jerome calls Betagla *tertio ab Hiericho lapide, duobus millibus ab Jordane*; if the latter is correct, it does not prove a post-Mosaic authorship (Tuch, Bohlen, &c.), since the phrase appears to have had an ideal usage with reference to Canaan in addition to the objective geographical one (Hengstenberg 'on the Genuineness of the Pentateuch,' vol. ii. p. 260; Keil's 'Introduction,' vol. i. p. 189; Kalisch 'on Genesis,' p. 776). **And there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation.** The Egyptians were exceedingly demonstrative and vehement in their public lamentations for the dead, rending their garments, smiting on their breasts, throwing dust and mud on their heads, calling on the deceased by name, and chanting funeral dirges to the music of a tambourine with the tinkling plates removed (Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. iii. p. 440, ed. 1878). **And he made a mourning for his father seven days.** This was a special mourning before interment (cf. Ecclus. xxii. 11).

Ver. 11.—**And when** (literally, *and*) **the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they** (literally, *and they*) **said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim,**—*i. e.* the meadow (אָבֵל) of the Egyptians, with a play upon the word (אֵבֶל) *mourning* (Keil, Kurtz, Gerlach, Rosenmüller, &c.), if indeed the word has not been punctuated wrongly—אָבֵל instead of אֵבֶל (Kalisch), which latter reading appears to have been followed by the LXX. (πένθος Αἰγύπτου) and the Vulgate (*planctus Ægypti*)—**which is beyond Jordan** (*vide supra*).

Vers. 12, 13.—**And his sons**—the Egyptians halting at Goren Atad (Keil, Hävernick, Kalisch, Murphy, &c.); but this does not appear from the narrative—**did unto him according as he commanded them** (the explanation of what they did being given in the next clause): **for his sons carried him**—not simply from Goren Atad, but from Egypt, so that this verse does not imply anything about the site of the Buckthorn threshing-floor (*vide supra*, ver. 11)—**into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre** (*vide* ch. xxiii.).

Ver. 14.—**And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.**

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*The funeral of Jacob.* I. THE PRIVATE SORROW. That a great and good man like Jacob, the father of a numerous family, the ancestor of an important people, the chieftain of an influential tribe, the head of the Church of God, should depart this life without eliciting from some heart a tribute of sorrow, is inconceivable. That any of his sons witnessed the last solemn act of this great spiritual wrestler, when he gathered up his feet into his bed and yielded up his spirit into the hands of God, without a tear and without a pang of grief, although it is only the emotion of Joseph that is recorded, is what we cannot for a moment believe. Less demonstrative than was that of Joseph, less deep too, probably, since the heart of Joseph appears to have been peculiarly susceptible of tender emotions, we may yet suppose that the grief of Joseph's brethren was not less real.

II. THE PUBLIC MOURNING. In accordance with the customs of the times, and of

the country, it was needful that a public ceremonial should be observed, in honour of the dead. Accordingly, Joseph, as the first step required by the usages of the people amongst whom he lived, gave instructions to his court physicians to embalm his father. For details as to the process, which occupied a period of forty days, the Exposition may be consulted. Then, along with this, for seventy days, peculiar rites, supposed to be expressive of the heart's grief, such as rending the garments, smiting the breast, throwing dust upon the head, calling on the deceased, were maintained with the assistance of friends, neighbours, and professional mourners.

III. THE FUNERAL PROCESSION. 1. *The train of mourners.* This consisted of the state and court officials of Pharaoh's house, and of the land of Egypt, the members of the houses of Joseph and his brethren, and a troop of horsemen and charioteers for protection on the journey. 2. *The line of march.* This was either straight north, through the country of the Philistines, if Goren Atad was south of Hebron in Judea, or it was round about by the way of the wilderness, if the halting-place was east of Jordan. 3. *The lamentation at Goren Atad.* This was intended as a special demonstration before burial, and was conducted with such vehemence as to arrest the attention of the Canaanites, who called the place in consequence, Abel-Mizraim; *i. e.* the plain or the mourning of Mizraim. 4. *The advance to Hebron.* It is more than probable that the Egyptians, who had accompanied the funeral procession from Goshen, remained behind at Goren Atad, while Joseph and his brethren bore the patriarch's body on to Hebron.

IV. THE SOLEMN INTERMENT. His sons buried him in the ancestral vault of Machpelah. Reverently, affectionately, tearfully, yet hopefully, let us hope, they laid the weary pilgrim down to sleep till the resurrection morn beside the dust of his own Leah, and in the company of Abraham, and Sarah, and Isaac, and Rebekah. It must have been an affecting, as surely it was a sublime spectacle, this coming home of an aged exile to lay his bones in his native land, this returning of the heir of Canaan to claim his inheritance, this laying down of the last member of the great patriarchal family among the other inmates of Machpelah. With the burial of Jacob, the first patriarchal family was complete, and the tomb was closed. The members of the second household slept at Shechem.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ch. l.—*Retrospect and prospect.* The fellowship of Egypt with the children of Israel in the burial of Jacob is full of significance. "A very great company went with them." "Abel-Mizraim" the Canaanites called it, "a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." It seemed to them altogether an Egyptian funeral. Yet we know that it was not. The work of God's grace will transform the world that it shall not be recognised. The funeral itself said, Egypt is not our home. It pointed with prophetic significance to the future of God's people. Canaan, the home of God's people, is the symbol of the everlasting home. Strange that the conscience should wake up in the brethren of Joseph after the father's death. How great the power of love in subduing fear! The true-hearted, tender piety of Joseph both towards God and towards his father and his kindred, is not influenced by such considerations as affected the lower characters of his brethren. They feared because they were not as true as he. "Joseph wept when they spake unto him," wept for them, wept to think they had not yet understood him. It is a great grief to a good man, a man of large, simple, loving nature, to be thought capable of unkindness and treachery. Joseph recognised that his life had been a Divine thing. He was only an instrument in the hands of God, in the place of God. He saw Providence working with grace. The influence of real religion is to sanctify and exalt natural affections. Joseph's end, like his father's, was a testimony to the faithfulness of God, and a fresh consecration of the covenant people to their Divine future. "I die, and God will surely visit you." He was a truly humble man to the last. His people's blessedness was not of his making. His death would be rather their gain than their loss. Yet "by faith he gave commandment concerning his bones" (Heb. xi. 22), not in any foolish feeling of relic worship, but because he would have the people while *in* Egypt not to be *of*

Egypt. Those who live on the promises of God will feel that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and confess, not by word only but by deed, and to the last moment of life, "that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth," "seeking a better city, even a heavenly."—R.

EXPOSITION.

Ver. 15. — **And when** (literally *and*) **Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they** (literally, *and they*) **said, Joseph will peradventure hate us,**—literally, *If Joseph hated us*, or pursued us hostilely (*sc.* what would become of us?), לוּ with the imperfect or future setting forth a possible but undesirable contingency (*vide* Ewald's 'Hebrew Syntax,' § 358*a* ; Gesenius, 'Lexicon,' *sub voce*)—**and will certainly requite us** (literally, *if returning he caused to return upon us*) **all the evil which we did unto him.** "What then?" is the natural conclusion of the sentence. "We must be utterly undone."

Vers. 16, 17.—**And** (under these erroneous though not unnatural apprehensions) **they sent a messenger unto Joseph,**—**literally,** *they charged Joseph*, i. e. they deputed one of their number (possibly Benjamin) to carry their desires to Joseph—**saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying** (though not recorded, the circumstance here mentioned may have been historically true), **So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil** (nothing is more inherently probable than that the good man on his death-bed did request his sons to beg their brother's pardon): **and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father.** Joseph's brethren in these words at once evince the depth of their humility, the sincerity of their repentance, and the genuineness of their religion. They were God's true servants, and they wished to be forgiven by their much-offended brother, who, however, had long since embraced them in the arms of his affection. **And Joseph wept when they spake unto him** — pained that they should for a single moment have entertained such suspicions against his love.

Ver. 18.—**And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.** Both the attitudes assumed and the words spoken were designed to express the intensity of their contrition and the fervour of their supplication.

Ver. 19.—**And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?**—*i. e.* either reading the words as a question, Should I arrogate to myself what obviously belongs to Elohim, viz., the power and right of vengeance (Calvin, Kalisch, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or the power to interfere with the purposes of God? (Keil, Rosenmüller); or, regarding them as an assertion, I am in God's stead, *i. e.* a minister to you for good (Wordsworth).

Ver. 20.—**But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good** (literally, *and ye were thinking or meditating evil against me; Elohim was thinking or meditating for good*, i. e. that what you did should be for good), **to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive** (*vide* ch. xlv. 5).

Ver. 21. — **Now therefore** (literally, *and now*) **fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones.** Thus he repeats and confirms the promise which he had originally made to them when he invited them to come to Egypt (ch. xlv. 11, 18, 19). **And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them**—literally, *to their hearts* (cf. ch. xxxiv. 3).

Ver. 22.—**And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.** Wordsworth notices that Joshua, who superintended the burial of Joseph in Shechem, also lived 110 years. Joseph's death occurred fifty-six years after that of Jacob.

Ver. 23. — **And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third** generation: — *i. e.* Ephraim's great - grandchildren (Kalisch, Lange), or Ephraim's great-great-grandsons (Keil, Murphy), which perhaps was not impossible, since Ephraim must have been born before Joseph's thirty - seventh year, thus allowing at least sixty-three years for four generations to intervene before the patriarch's death, which might be, if marriage happened early, say not later than eighteen—**the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh** —by a concubine (1 Chron. vii. 14) —**were brought up upon Joseph's knees**—literally, *were born upon Joseph's knees*, i. e. were adopted by him as soon as they were born (Kalisch, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or were born so that he could take them also upon his knees, and show his love for them (Keil).

Vers. 24, 25.—**And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God** (Elohim) **will surely visit you,**—literally, *visiting will visit you*, according to his promise (ch. xlvi. 4)—**and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel,**—as his father had

done of him (ch. xlvii. 31),—**saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.** The writer to the Hebrews (ch. xi. 22) refers to this as a signal instance of faith on the part of Joseph.

Ver. 26.—**So Joseph died,** being **an hundred and ten years old** (literally, *a son of a hundred and ten years*), **and they** (*i. e.* the children of Israel) **embalmed him** (*vide* on ver. 2), **and he was put in a coffin** (or chest, *i. e.* a mummy case, which was commonly constructed of sycamore wood) **in Egypt,** where he remained for a period of 360 years, until the time of the Exodus, when, according to the engagement now given, his remains were carried up to Canaan, and solemnly deposited in the sepulchre of Shechem (Josh. xxiv. 32).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 15—26.—*The last of the house of Jacob.* I. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN (vers. 15—18). 1. *The unworthy suspicion.* After Jacob's death, Joseph's brethren began to fear lest he should seek to revenge himself on account of his early injuries. It was perhaps natural that such an apprehension should arise within their breasts considering the enormity of the wickedness of which they had been guilty; but remembering all the tokens of Joseph's love which already they had received, it was surely unkind to Joseph to suffer such a thought for even a moment to find a lodgment in their breasts. 2. *The friendly embassage.* Deputing Benjamin, it is thought to be the bearer of their wishes, they instructed him to remind Joseph of their dead father's desire that he should forgive the evil he had suffered at their hands, and to solicit an express assurance from his own lips that it was so. 3. *The voluntary humiliation.* Whether they allowed their messenger to return or followed close upon his heels cannot be certainly concluded. But they appear to have resorted in a body to Joseph's palace, and placed themselves unconditionally in his power. "Behold, we be thy servants," meaning, "Do with us what seemeth good in thy sight." 4. *The generous assurance.* As they desired, he explicitly declared, though with tears at their unkindness, that they had no cause whatever to anticipate his anger, that he was not in God's place that he should seek to punish them for a sin which had turned out so providentially for good, and that on the contrary he would continue to nourish them and their little ones so long as they remained in Egypt.

II. JOSEPH AND HIS CHILDREN'S CHILDREN. 1. *The children of Ephraim.* He lived long enough to see the children of Ephraim's grandchildren born into this sinful world, and then he died at the good old age of 110 years. 2. *The children of Manasseh.* He saw the offspring of Manasseh's son born, and either adopted into his own family, or brought up in his own house.

III. JOSEPH AND THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. 1. *Joseph's premonition of approaching death.* "Joseph said unto his brethren,"—*i. e.* the descendants of his brethren, his actual brethren having in all probability predeceased him,—"I die." Along with this Joseph recalled to their minds the sacred promise that God would eventually visit them and cause them to return to their own land. It is well when death approaches to remember God's promises. The thoughts of God are very suitable for dying hours. 2. *Joseph's preparation for death.* He took an oath of the children of Israel that they would carry up his bones to Canaan, in this following the example and imitating the faith of his revered father Jacob. 3. *Joseph's falling asleep in death.* "Joseph died, the son of an hundred and ten years." He had lived a shorter life than any of the four great preceding patriarchs; but his life had been eminently honoured and useful, and his death, we may be sure, would be beautifully calm and peaceful. 4. *Joseph's body after death.* It was embalmed, and the mummy put into a coffin for better preservation, until the time approached when it could be taken for consignment to the holy land.

Learn—1. How difficult it is to shake oneself free from the evil consequences of sin, even after it has been forgiven. 2. How painful to a loving heart it is to be suspected of cherishing a feeling of revenge. 3. How generously God sometimes rewards his servants on earth, by permitting them to see children's children, born and brought up, and sometimes also brought into the family of his Church. 4. How peacefully a child of God can die; and 5. How hopefully he ought to look forward to the resurrection

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 20.—*Intended bane an unintentional boon.* "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." Joseph must have been deeply pained by the mistrust of his brethren. They implied that it was only out of consideration for his father that he had been kind to them. Yet Joseph had forgiven them. They could not so easily believe in the forgiveness; just as man now is forgiven by God, but he has the greatest difficulty in believing in the reconciliation. Joseph's brethren sent a messenger unto him, probably Benjamin. They who had once sold Joseph as a slave now offer to be his slaves. The offer is to him humiliating. Moreover, it is great pain to him. To a noble soul designing only good to others there is no greater offensiveness than to have his doings viewed with suspicion. Joseph repudiated the mistrust, and refused the offered self-enslavement. He assures his brethren of full forgiveness in words which must have been as softest balm to wounded spirits. In a spirit of the highest magnanimity he tries even to make them view with complacency the result of their wrong-doing. In the text we have the "grand golden key to the whole of his life's history." Notice how—

I. Intended bane often becomes unintentional boon. Evil works evil to others, but sometimes good. Intended evil is overruled by God when he has some good object in view. "Man proposes, God disposes." God always knows what the result of certain actions will be. If they are good actions they work in line with his will; if evil, he overrules them. If the horse keeps the road it feels not the rein, but if it will turn aside, the sharp bit must draw it back again. Whatever speculation there may be about our absolute freeness, we *feel* that we are free. It is the glory of God to be able to trust with freedom a being with such great powers for moral evil, like man. He would teach us to *use* our wills, by giving us full freedom. We frequently pain him by our misuse and our abuse of our powers. What evil we devise and strive to carry out! The brethren of Joseph even intended murder, and modified it by selling their brother into slavery. They acted more cruelly than some of the men-stealers of Africa. The latter steal strangers to sell them, but these ten men sold their own brother. They thought they were rid of him. Egypt was a long way off; Joseph was but a weakling, and might soon perish. They would be free from his presence, and could divide their guilty gains. They hardened themselves against his tears and entreaties; and even in malicious spite were ready to slay the weeping youth because he did not appreciate their considerateness in selling him into slavery instead of killing him outright. It was an evil deed. Those who looked on could see no good to come out of it. There were, however, several great results. 1. He was personally advanced in life, and was able to make the best of it. 2. He saved thousands of people from perishing, and among them his own family. 3. He was the means of bringing Israel into Egypt, where it developed as a people. Its deliverance gave occasion to the mightiest display of Divine power. 4. He became a type of the Messiah—rejected of men. Thus we know not the results of any of our acts. God can overrule, to the development of character and spiritual power, circumstances seemingly most opposed to our best interests. God knows what is best. He could break the plans of the evil in pieces. Instead of this he oft confounds the wicked by letting them see that the ends they did not desire have been attained in spite of their opposition, and even by the very existence, that the intended bane becomes an unintentional boon. Thus Joseph's brothers found it, and bowed their heads.

II. There are several lessons to be learned from the way in which, by God's overruling, intended bane becomes a boon. 1. It is a *dangerous* thing to scheme against others. Especially is it a dangerous thing when a good man is the object of the attack. It is likely to be checked and to recoil. "A greater power than we can contradict may thwart our plans." There are a thousand chances of check or change. Men have so noticed this that even a French moralist said, "I do not know what hidden force it is that seems to delight in breaking up human plans just at the moment when they promise to turn out well." Yes, there is a "hidden force," ever watchful, ever balancing human actions, ever ordaining, either in this world or the next, the just meed of praise or blame, of retribution or reward. See how the scribes

and Pharisees held councils against Jesus, the gentle, pure, loving teacher of truth, and healer of diseases, They sought how they might kill him. They excommunicated him, they sent others to entrap him. They succeeded at length in nailing him to the cross. They carried out their evil intentions; but that cross became the throne of the Saviour's power, the salvation; and the death of Christ became the life of the world. They went by wagging their heads, but at last they had to wring their hands. They themselves were left in their sin, and their "house left unto them desolate," while unto the Christ they hated all men are being drawn. 2. That God overrules evil s no license to do evil. Many would say, "Let us do evil that good may come." This would suit carnal nature. They would say, "Sin is not so great an evil, since God can overrule it." To talk like this would be like throwing dust in our own eyes when we have reached an eminence from whence we might behold a beautiful landscape. It would be like a youth who, seeing a gardener pruning trees, should take a knife and cut and slash all the trunks. Or, it would be like the act of one who, seeing how an artist had wrought in a picture some blunder into a beauty, should take a brush and streak with black the brilliant sky. We are not at liberty to sin that God may bring good out of it. 3. That God overrules evil should make us *feel our dependence* on him. If we could succeed in good without him, if all we intended to do could surely be calculated upon, we should become proud. It is well that God sometimes even breaks up our good plans in order that we may learn this lesson. We might even intend good without him otherwise, and that would lead to evil in ourselves. But we are dependent on him to check the evil of our own lives and of others' intentions. 4. It should make us *hopeful* also with respect to our affairs. Surely out of this thought we may get "royal contentment," as knowing we are in the hands of a noble protector, "who never gives ill but to him who deserves ill." 5. It should make us hopeful with respect to the order and destiny of the world. In some way, far off, God's glory may be advanced, even by the way in which he will have subdued, by Christ, *all* things unto himself. 6. Intended good is not always a benefit to those for whom intended. God intends good to men, and provides a way to bless, but men refuse. See at what a cost the way has been provided. Those who refuse are under worse condemnation. "It were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 7. We must all face our wrong-doing some time or other. We shall find that the evil we have sown has produced a harvest of weeds, which we shall have sorrowfully to reap. We ought to pray earnestly, "Deliver us from evil."—H.

Ver. 26.—*The lessons of a life.* Joseph's life remarkable for the variety of his experience, and for the consistency of his character through all. A man full of human sympathy, who also walked with God. Here the charm of his history. We can thoroughly enter into his feelings. In his boyhood, deservedly loved by his father, and on that very account hated by his brethren (1 John iii. 13); in his unmerited sufferings; in his steadfast loyalty to God and to his master; in his exaltation, and the wisdom with which he ruled Egypt; and in his forgiveness of those who had sold him as a slave, we feel for him and with him. But Joseph died. His trials and his triumphs passed away. The scene where he had played so conspicuous a part is filled by other forms. And he who was the means of saving a nation must share the lot of the most commonplace life. One event happens to all (Eccles. ii. 15).

I. The uncertain tenure of earthly good. No care can keep away misfortune, not even care to walk uprightly before God. Sin brings sorrow sooner or later; but it is a great mistake to think that all sorrow springs from faults committed (Ps. lxxiii. 5). Joseph's slavery was because his Godward life condemned his brothers and made them angry. His being thrown into prison was because he would not yield to temptation. This often a stumbling-block. If God really marks all that is done, why are his most faithful servants often so sorely smitten? We can neither deny the fact nor trace the reason of the stroke. Enough to know that it is part of God's plan (Heb. xii. 6), to fit us for the end of our being. As Christ was perfected by suffering (Heb. ii. 10), so must we be. And just because to bear the cross is needful for a follower of Christ (Matt. xvi. 24)—and this is not the endurance of

suffering at our own choice, but the willing receiving of what God is pleased to send—the uncertainty of life gives constant opportunity for that submission to his will which is the result of living faith.

II. THE ONE END OF ALL LIVING (Exod. i. 6). How varied soever the outward lot, wealth or penury, joy or mourning, one day all must be left behind. To what purpose then is it to labour for good, or to dread impending evil? Can we not remember many whose name was much in men's mouths, full of youthful vigour or mature wisdom? And they are gone, and the world goes on as before. Joseph, embalmed in Egypt with almost royal honours, was as completely separated from all his wealth and power as if he had never possessed them. Others filled his place and occupied his gains, in their turn to give them up, and awake from the dream of possessions to join the company of those who have left all these things behind. And is this all? Has life nothing worth striving for? Is there no possession that we can really regard as our own?

III. LIFE HAS ABIDING TREASURES. Was it nothing to Joseph that he possessed and showed a forgiving spirit (Matt. vi. 14, 15), and singleness of heart, and earnest benevolence, and watchful consciousness of God's presence? These are treasures the world thinks little of. But these are treasures indeed, ministering comfort without care. And when earthly things slip from the grasp these abide, reflections of the mind of Christ, and telling of his abiding in the soul (Rev. xiv. 13).—M.

HOMILETICAL INDEX

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